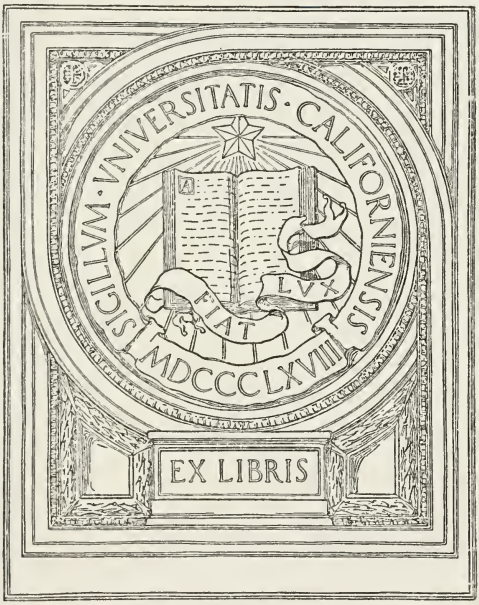
GIFT OF
W. H. Smyth



TYLNEY HALL.

BY

THOMAS HOOD,

AUTHOR OF THE COMIC ANNUAL, ETC.

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Gift of W. H. Smyth

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

DEDICATION.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

My lord Duke: It has often happened to me, in my sea-side rambles, to behold the name of some illustrious personage gracing a craft of very humble pretensions. Such an inscription doubtless exalts the vessel in the eyes of its owner; for instance, the master of the William the Fourth must feel something of the conscious dignity of a prime minister, when he takes the helm in his hand to guide his sovereign through his watery empire.

Sometimes the name on the stern of the vessel is a memorial of past kindness and condescension on the part of the noble godfather or godmother; and then, far as the wind may urge, or the waves compel the little bark, a sentiment of respect, gratitude, and attachment, goes along with it. In perpetuating these feelings, a fishing-boat may become a pleasure-boat to its proprietor.

In this spirit, I prefix your Grace's name to this Work, the first I launch of its kind; and whether it be fated to live at sea, or to rot on shore, it will bear witness that I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's much obliged and devoted servant,

Thomas Hood.

Lake House, Wanstead, *October* 20, 1834.

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INTRODUCTION.

I WAS sitting snugly in my sanctorum, with the remains of a bottle of port wine before me, wherewith, according to custom, I had dismissed a new work from the stocks, when, after a preliminary tap at the door, two strangers presented themselves, and with much bowing and many invitations were induced to take chairs on either side of the table. I saw them individually glance at the shallow pool of purple that occupied the bottom of the decanter; and, with my usual sense of the duties of hospitality before they had done hemming and clearing their throats preparatory to declaring the purport of their visit, a fresh magnum was glowing through the crystal. Whilst they were enjoying and commending the raciness of a celebrated vintage, I took the opportunity of scrutinizing my guests; and certainly no two human beings could present more essential differences both in face and figure. One was tall and thin, with a preposterously long body and a lugubrious pale face; whereas the other was short and punchy, with a round, shining, chubby, ruddy countenance, that did not seem to have kept pace with his age, but had remained a boy's head on a man's shoulders. He spoke smartly, with a brisk, merry voice, occasionally breaking into a joyous chuckle, without any apparent cause but the mere exuberance of animal spirits. His companion, on the contrary, had a slow, deep, melancholy drawl, with a touch of the conventicle twang in it, and he indulged in periodical suspirations as regularly recurring as the pattern of an area-railing, ten breathings and then a sigh, ten more and another sigh, and so on. I could hardly help comparing myself, with all due modesty as to talents, to Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy, in the celebrated picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. One peculiarity forcibly struck my notice; at every sip of his wine the little fellow's eyes brightened and twinkled with greater glee, till every instant I expected he would break out into some lusty carol; while the other took great gulps, and at every draught became more dull and dismal; as if he had been swallowing so much ditch-water. Every inch of his face seemed to take an ell, and his voice became proportionately doleful, till at last it fairly tolled like a passing-bell. Both seemed to feel some awkwardness at broaching the subject of their visit; and after sundry significant nods and winks had been bandied to and fro between them, I made bold to inquire their names, and to what circumstance I was indebted for the honour of their company.

"My friend, Mr. Maurice," said the little man, "is the reader at Messrs. Stukeley's printing-office."

"And my friend, Mr. Collis," said the tall man, "is the reader at Messrs. Burnett's."

"As such, Sir," said the Grig, with a grin, "it was my pleasant duty to read, revise, and correct the proof sheets of the first two volumes of your mirth-provoking novel,—O lord!"—and throwing himself back in his chair, he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, as if at the remembrance of some very funny passage.

"And in a similar capacity," said the grave Maurice, "I had the pleasure (a sigh) of reading the third volume, and, without flattery, I enjoyed it as much as ever I did anything in my life."

The doleful look that accompanied this assurance, rendered the compliment rather equivocal; however I bowed right and left, preserving my gravity as well as I could, which was a little disconcerted by the extreme contrast of the two personages that alternately saluted me. The only

point they had in common was a relish for the wine: they evidently thought it good, and kept pulling proofs of it with the perseverance of pressmen; but the long face only grew still gloomier, whilst the short one, in quirks and cranks, and waggish workings, began to emulate that of Tim Bobbin. He was pleased to inform me, with a physiognomy which could only have been appropriately framed in a horse-collar, "that he had once read a serious poem of mine with great gratification, and he must regret I now did so little in that line;" which drew from the sad one a dreary sentence in favor of a certain "jocose effusion," coupled with a sort of lament that I now drew as little from my jocular vein as my jugular. Of course I bowed again, albeit not a little surprised at such objections; and after another glass, we came to business. I was given to understand that according to the general custom of printing-offices, my present work had undergone, not a retrospective review, but a prospective one, before the sheets were gathered for the binder, and Messrs. Maurice and Collis were the organs of their respective fraternities, charged to convey to me the strictures which the precocious critics of their several coteries had thought proper to pass upon my novel. Accustomed as I had been, when Editor of a Magazine, to receive and listen to comments from such quarters on the articles of my contributors, I felt less surprise than another author might have done at such an intimation, and, like Sir Fretful Plagiary, I expressed my perfect readiness to listen to their candid opinions. Of course I expected to find a sharp flavour in some of their remarks; even as Dr. Kitchiner, in a recipe for punch, now before me, actually recommends as the best acid, a due proportion of "critic," a word he doubtlessly considered equivalent to citric, or quintessence of lemon; so I summoned up my philosophy accordingly.

The Momus began; and I confess, to my astonishment, his main objection to my novel insinuated a dearth of the pathetic.

"Not," he said, "but there is abundance of bloodshed and shedding of tears: if I recollect rightly, the second volume alone contains a divorce, arson, burglary, and suicide. But what of that? Excuse me, sir, for saying so, but we know your tricks. We are not such fools as to snivel when all the while you are grinning at us in your sleeve."

"Well, you amaze me, sir," said I, involuntarily lifting up my hands; "it was my own impression that, on the whole, my novel was too sombre."

"Excuse me," answered the Droll, "you were never more mistaken. There are things that might be pathetic from other pens—but we know you of old. Even your horrors don't take us in,—show us a clot of coagulated blood, and we tip one another the wink, and say 'currant jelly.' For instance, there is the murder of Belmour, Higgs tittered all the time he was setting it up; and for my own part, when the proof came before me at dinner-time, I confess I fairly choked in my pint of stout."

"And I wish you had!" I exclaimed, testily, nettled beyond patience at such a reception of my pet catastrophe. "But that's the way with your would-be critics: they are as absurd as Dr. Johnson in his definition of wit. It traces resemblances, says he, and judgment detects differences; as if, forsooth, the same faculty that perceived the likeness of a man to a monkey, did not involve the ability of distinguishing a horse from a hog. So, if a man be alive to the ludicrous, by your lop-sided theory he can have no sympathy with the pathetic: because he is sometimes in jest, you will never allow him to be serious. I do verily believe, if I were to publish the elegy I wrote on my youngest boy, who was taken from me by scarlet fever last June, you would be hunting for jokes in the lamentation of a bereaved father, and looking for puns in it."

"To be sure, Sir," answered the Risible, with a broad grin. "I correct the Comic. But to return to the novel.—There's the interview of

Leonora with her lover, after taking the veil; I thought it the funniest thing I had ever read! I did, Sir, upon my life. But I didn't stand alone, the whole office roared at it—roared, Sir,"—and the villain gave me a fresh sample of his own powers by "laughing consumedly."

"I assure you, Sir," said the Lugubrious, hastening to interpose, "we think very differently at Messrs. Stukeley's. To our tastes, and to my own especially, your three volumes are too exclusively gloomy and depressing. The compositors compared it to newspaper work; nothing but Shocking Accidents, Afflicting Events, and Lamentable Occurrences. It wants relief—an occasional humorous sketch; if there were but a single chapter that one could smile over—but it is all wretched and miserable from title to finis."

I was going to reply, but the Democritus forestalled me. "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho!" he shouted; "Maurice, my boy, you should have read the parting of Isabella and Theodore, when he was banished!" and again his "lungs crowed like chanticleer."

Was there ever such a provoking scoundrel? I longed to make him laugh on the wrong side of his mouth; but I subdued the rising passion, and addressed him with what I considered to be coolness. "Tastes differ," I said, "and I cannot answer for the vagaries it may choose to take with certain individuals. For instance, Sir," (and I gave him a nod, as much as to say, You may take it to yourself,) "Nero fiddled whilst Rome was burning; and there may be mental palates so depraved as to find a mirthful relish even in the heart-rending of a poor female, divorced for ever from the object of her affections. As for the incident that made you so merry, Sir, I can only say, that my own family, and they ought to know me best, so little suspected me of any underhand mockery, that they bestowed their own tears on the misery of Isabella. I will not swear that I did not turn a little womanish myself at hearing the chapter in question impressively read aloud by the touching voice of my wife."

"And Pluto as *I* am in general," said the Heraclitus with a pavior's sigh, "I will not deny that it drew iron tears down my cheek, when my wife in the same manner read aloud the disasters of the poor unfortunate Pedrillo, and his terror when detained by the banditti."

"What, cry at that!" ejaculated the Laugher, and he burst into a fresh peal, which for the first time I forgave him, as the distresses of Pedrillo were intended to be of a ludicrous character; but I quickly revoked my pardon, when the fellow added, "that it was as comical as anything in the book, the deathbed of Gaspar always excepted."

"Ay, now you are joking, Collis," said the Sepulchral, "the exit of the robber is undeniably horrible, and so is the poisoning of Sancho—beyond anything in the range of fiction."

I stared alternately at the speakers, for the said poisoning was merely imaginary, like that of Justice Frogmore in Humphrey Clinker. I could hardly persuade myself but that the pair of Readers had planted themselves upon me to enjoy a concerted jest at my expense, except that it would have been an offensive liberty of the first magnitude. However, I resolved to turn the tables, and as they had given me some annoyance, I determined to retaliate. I was meditating on the means, when after an important hem, with a tone peculiarly solemn, the grave Maurice brought forward an objection, to which he gave all the weight he could by the specific gravity of his countenance.

"It is an ungrateful office," he said, "but as the representative of a class distinguished as the decidedly serious, I am called upon to notice with reprehension the great freedoms you take with a body of men, who might be called in justice, as they are in derision, the Saints. It has the censure of the whole office,—yes, Sir, down to the very devils."

The ludicrous association conveyed by the last part of the sentence made me join in an involuntary chorus with the Jovial; but my constitutional antipathy to cant and canters soon roused my spleen, and left no more hilarity in my laugh than in a hyæna's. "If you mean the picture of Brother Pius," said I, "it is but a rough sketch, a mere outline to the finished coloured portrait I mean some day to draw of a hypocritical, canting, trading, time-serving knave,—one who makes his Ledger his Bible, and the latter his Waste-book; a lying, cogging, Maw-worm, that will commit strictly pious frauds, and cheat to a decidedly serious amount. I know the breed well; they are vile birds of prey, not mounting upwards like the sweet lark to carol at heaven's gate, but that they may make a stoop the better upon earth and its carrion."

The dismal one turned up his eyes till I saw nothing but the whites—an action which produced a fresh burst of merriment from his opposite neighbour; but it was a sound of which I began to get weary, and I resolved if possible to rid myself of my guests. I drew myself up stiffly before I spoke.

"After all, gentlemen, is there not something in this of the Souter out of Selkirk, or the cobler beyond his last? To my humble apprehension your province is to correct the press, not the Author; and I am compelled to say, that the numerous mistakes and literal errors that have been allowed to pass in my work, hint a laxity in your peculiar duties, which is not to be atoned for by your interference with matters for which you are not responsible. For instance, I wrote in Scotch, 'the wale' of the country, which looked so 'very like a whale' to you, that you turned it into weal. Do you suppose that Auld Rob Morris, 'the wale of auld men,' was a great lubberly Leviathan, living in a valley, with oxen and sheep of his own?"

"Very good, Sir, very good," said the Momus, as soon as he could articulate for laughing. "But authors may thank their own crabbed scrawls for the errors. Your own, for instance. Higgs kept samples of it, and has bound them up like a book of autographs; and certainly the collection presents as much variety as if all writers since Cadmus had lent a hand to it. Sometimes it is a little close niggle, as if you studied economy in stationery; at other times we receive bouncing round text, as if you were amanuensis to Gog and Magog. To-day the lines go as straight and steadily as if you were writing a prize essay for the Temperance Society; to-morrow they go reeling up and down, as if your pen had dipped into a brandy bottle by mistake for the inkstand. Occasionally, when you are lazy, you favour us with abbreviations, and we have to study a new system of short-hand; and now and then you teaze us with a set of mere hieroglyphics, that persuade us you have been writing in your sleep. In short, we know all your moods, Sir,—when you are drowsy, and when you are lazy, when you are half drunk or whole drunk; when you are dissatisfied, and when you are up in your stirrups, and don't think small beer of yourself—that's when your d's and g's and y's flourish their tails. We know all your weathers, sir, and keep them regularly recorded, day after day, like a meteorological register."

"The deuce you do!" I exclaimed. "Then Messrs. Burnett have no more of my printing, that's all,"—but as I started up to ring the bell, in order that the intruding gentlemen might be shown out, I found myself broad awake, and alone, in my sanctorum, with the relic of port wine still unconsumed before me. I had been merely dreaming: but the perversity of the two visionary Readers haunted me long afterward, and even at this moment I have some misgivings, whether the following pages may not be fated to meet with some real Collises and Maurices in the world, who will not peruse,

"In the same spirit that the Author writ."

TYLNEY HALL.

CHAPTER I.

"An old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving man a fresh tapster."
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

On the skirts of the extensive forest of H—— there stood, perhaps still stands, a little inn or house of entertainment, which by its sequestered situation, seemed destined for the occupation of that anomalous character, a publican of retired habits. Its locality, indeed, promised little more custom than the site of that celebrated tavern on Muckslush Heath, in Colman's comedy. On one side the eye wandered over a wide barren level, clothed and variegated only by grass dwindled into moss, and trees stunted into shrubs. This bleak waste was known by the significant name of the Flats. On the other side stretched an immense park, behind an angle of which lay perdue a small village, the main prop and stay of Heady and Co's entire, as retailed from the tap of this sequestered Diamond of the Desert. Over a side door, leading to a diminutive yard, appeared a notification of good entertainment for man and horse, with a hint of a neat post chaise, whose post was almost a sinecure; for though Jonas kept a pair of horses for hire, they were seldom let out, except to grass. By way of sign, three Chinese pigs with long ears would have puzzled a zoologist, but for the superscription of "the Rabbits;" while a writing underneath informed the reader that there was an ordinary every day at one, although historically such a circumstance was extraordinary; and an addendum expressed, that this establishment was kept by—for it did not keep—one Jonas Hanway, late coachman to Sir Theodore Bowles. Honest Jonas had lived so steadily and soberly all his life, that he could afford to take up the trade of making others unsteady and unsober; however, in obedience to his natural bent, he took the most retired public house he could find; and instead of "a fine stroke of business in a desirable low hard-drinking neighborhood," according to advertisement, was the proprietor of the snug genteel concern of the Rabbits, doing no butts a week. The title of the house was derived from the neighboring warrens, and might have induced a belief that it numbered a few poachers among its customers; but the house, on the contrary, was a well-ordered one, at which even the modern Temperance Societies might have held their anniversaries. Its chief visiters, indeed, were a set of village tradesmen, who spent their one sixpence or one shilling per night with a punctual regularity, most of them being members of a threepenny whist club, which held its sittings three times a week. By help of this, and a very little chance custom, Jonas contrived to keep in good credit with his brewer and distiller, and to carry on a concern, which, though it yearly swallowed up his small annuity in the funds, was so much to his liking, that he would not have taken a hundred pounds for the goodwill. Bred up from boyhood in a sedate, early-rising, churchgoing family, he made a point of emptying his tap-room—when it was not empty of its own accord—at the hour of eleven; and on Sundays he was rigid in shutting up divinely; by which phrase he meant that he

closed his doors during divine service. In short, he drove his house as discreetly, as soberly, and as steadily, as he had done the old family vehicle with Sir Theodore Bowles and the gout in its inside. His chief delight was in reading the newspaper, and especially the parliamentary debates; though, till the hour of his death, his parlour guests could never decide whether he was Whig or Tory, but each secretly believed that Jonas inclined to his own particular side. This seeming impartiality procured him the honourable situation of umpire to the whist club, till, having given contrary opinions on every point of the game, the players at last preferred to refer their disputed cases to the summary arbitration of "heads or tails," for at that time there was no Despatch or Bell's Life in London, to inform correspondents, "whether if A. held the ace of hearts, B. was entitled to play the deuce of diamonds to C.'s nine of spades, which had fallen to D's ten of clubs,—A. being a married man and the rest all bachelors."

So much for Jonas. Fortune seemed to have cast his lot amiss; as the world goes he made but a sorry sort of publican, but he would have made an excellent parish clerk. Mrs. Hanway, on the contrary, as an Irishman would say, seemed born a landlady; and the very worst of her faults, when tried at the bar, appeared of advantage to her character. Technically speaking, her temper was a little *pricked*, but its tartness proved of essential service to a mistress who had commonly to control a termagent cook and an obstreperous pot-boy. Besides, the temper of her husband, which was really drawn a little too mild, acted admirably as a counterpose, or, as he used to express it himself, they made excellent "half and half." Her other failing, for she had but a pair, "leaned to virtue's side," and may be mentioned without malice. In her single days she had lived in the now almost obsolete situation of still-room woman to Lady Bowles, from whom she had imbibed a benevolent curiosity into the ailments of the poor, with an invincible desire to exhibit, as the faculty call it, her drugs and simples. In her zeal, however, to administer to all the "ills that flesh is heir to," she scarcely paid due respect to the proverb of "let *well* alone," but seemed to think, with certain politicians, that constitutions are good for nothing but to be mended. No soup-committee ever distributed their decoctions to the poor with more liberality than Mrs. Hanway: her still was literally never still, but day and night dripped teas and tinctures from herbs and drugs, whose virtues were estimated in exact proportion to their nauseousness. Some few patients she had, who took her prescriptions for love, and the impatients she conciliated by a presentation glass of Geneva. Many were the hale invalids, and the Temperance Society may publish the fact to their discredit, who consented to take her doses for the sake of her drams. Unfortunately her medical practice, though it brought customers to the bar, was the cause of banishing one or two who could be ill spared from the tap-room and parlour. Even thus, for instance, was the Rabbits deprived of the steady Saturday patronage of Master Gregory the head constable, through a few drops of something very wholesome, which she had volunteered into his periodical glass of grog. The zealous functionary, in the discharge of his duty on a certain night, had, by great vigilance, succeeded in catching a cold instead of apprehending a sheep-stealer, and an awful wheeziness was the consequence; but let a constable be ever so wheezy, he may reasonably object to such a constable's miscellany as rum and water and squills.

CHAPTER II.

"Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them."
MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS OF WHIST.

IN the weather column of Moore's Almanac for the year of our Lord 17—, and exactly opposite to the date of Friday the 19th of November, a state of atmosphere was predicted unusually genial and serene. Accordingly, on the morning of the 19th, the wind began to blow with a violence unparalleled for half a century, accompanied by occasional showers of hailstones, of a magnitude so unexampled, that several natural philosophers took the pains of measuring and publishing their dimensions. As the gale set in from the south-west, the Rabbits had the full benefit of its force, the air not being at all composed in those Flats which lay in front of that desolate house of call. On the evening of that day, the same five faces were in the parlour as if they had never left it since the preceding club-night; and the usual members of the lower house were vehemently puffing in self-defence against a chimney which asserted the same privilege of smoking in a common tap-room. Mrs. Hanway was in her bar, inwardly lamenting that she could prescribe no home-made soothing syrup for nature in convulsions, while Jonas wandered from room to room, listening to one of the signs of the times taking its full swing of the tempest, till the emblematical rabbits seemed to squeak as shrilly as pigs in a high wind. Exactly as the clock struck eight, Mr. Tablet, the president of the whist-club, proposed to make a rubber: he was a gray-headed, weather-beaten man, with short legs and a tall body, which, in speaking, he swayed backwards and forwards with a mechanical motion, which hinted that though now a master mason, he had formerly sat in a sentry-box and played at see-saw with a block of marble. Catching up the solitary pack of cards, and giving them a clumsy shuffle, and looking round the room, he addressed the members of his board of green cloth with—

"Gentlemen, is any of you agreeable?"

"For my parts, as nobody else speaks," said a fat man with a thin voice, "I've no objection in life to take a hand, provided I'm wanted to make a fourth."

"That's two, then," said Tablet, "for in course, as president, I sets the first rubber a-going. How say you, Mr. Hands?"

"Why you know," said Mr. Hands, "I seldom or never play, as ever since my fit I've impaired my memory, and am apt to revoke."

Mr. Benson and Mr. Walden were severally appealed to, as the forlorn hope of the rubber, when Mr. Benson "was perfectly agreeable to anything, and to any pints they liked," as was also Mr. Walden, the last man of the pack—but on the impracticable condition, that they should be excused cutting in till after the first two rubbers or so had been played out.

"Such being the case," said the president, "I have nothing left for me to say, except *hic jacet*;" and with these professional words, he deposited the pack like a miniature monument on the green baize. After the foregoing ceremony, which, by the way, occurred with little variation of request or apology three times per week, this ghost of a whist-club subsided into a mere Wordsworthian "party in a parlour;" till at length a member volunteered a song, if such a phrase may be applied to a song which had served in the line for several years past. Those who have seen a small thread of table beer, with a natural shake of its own, issuing out of a nine-gallon cask, may form an idea of the slender warble that trans-

pired from the fat man with a thin voice, in honour of the "Maid of the Walley." Strange to say, weak as it was, it was vehemently encored, as if the auditors acted on the principle of the good man in the Scottish song,

> "Syne if her typenny chance to be sma',
> We'll tak a good scour o't and ca't it awa."

But the dwellers in cities accustomed to Magazins de Nouveautés, and Theâtres de Variétés, have little conception of the monotonous routine in which provincial regulars and orderlies find, not merely content, but enjoyment.

The da capo had just reached the second line of the second verse, when the air without, proving stronger than the air within, burst open the dilapidated casement, and a gust of wind came in, which blew out the singer's voice like a rush-light. Immediately, by favour of the opening, they distinguished a voice calling lustily for help; in a few seconds a summons was repeated at the front door, which was speedily opened, and a stranger entered who seemed to be on such bad terms with the lights, that they all went out as he came in, and it was not till he had made his way to the fire in the tap-room, that his features could be recognized.

"As I live by bread," ejaculated the landlord, "it's unlucky Joe."

Joseph Spiller, the unfortunate postillion thus referred to, was a living example of that cross-grained fate which attends upon certain devoted individuals through life. Born under an evil star, probably a falling one, he had been oftener thrown from the saddle, or pitched from the bar, than any postboy of his standing, or rather sitting. He was literally a marked man in a stricter sense than the term generally implies, for the bridge of his nose was broken, he had lost one eye. with the whole of his front teeth, and had a limp in his left leg—personal deodands levied against him from mishaps purely accidental. He had been a careful driver, and a sober, but sometimes the commissioners of roads left stumbling-blocks in his path, sometimes he was the victim of inexperienced or inebriated charioteers who drove against him; and above all he had the luck of being associated with more stumblers, kickers, shyers, and other four-legged vices, than any boy of his school. He had had as many horses killed under him as Prince Eugene, and more runaways than the driver of the last stage to Gretna-green. Rendered superstitious at last by such a succession of mishaps, poor Joe had become something of a fatalist; he gave up inspecting the harness, or looking at the linchpins, and was never particularly ready to pull up his horse's head in case of a stumble. "It was all one," he said, "as to how a horse was held in hand if he was rid by a hunfortunate fellow that was borned on a Friday." Want of care thus coalescing with want of luck, an increased number of casualties obtained for Joe the unenviable name of "unlucky," by which Hanway described him.

"In the name of mercy,—Joe," said the host, taking an upset for granted, "in the name of mercy, Joe, who's hurt?"

"He's as dead as a stubnail by this time," whimpered Joe.

"Heaven forbid," said the landlord; "but there's no time to be lost."

"Such being the case we must have a shutter—there's one blown off the hinges in the club-room," suggested the president of the packmen.

"Lord love you," said Joe, "he don't want no shutter—the knacker's drag is all he requires now, poor thing."

"Thank goodness, it's a horse, then," said Mrs. Hanway, "and not a human being."

"To be sure it is," answered Joe, "but that's like my luck; never a one else but me would have had a job across the Flats, and on such a night; some can't go wrong if they would, and with broad day-light to help 'em; but for my part I can go off the road in the dark."

"But the horse?" inquired Jonas.

"Choked with his collar long afore I could hextricate t'other, and with nobody inside by way of helps, only a very young youth and an old one, and him a scraping his shoes at death's door, and as yellow as my silk jacket; but that's my luck."

"Well, there's a Providence, even in posting," exclaimed Mrs. Hanway, casting a side glance at her jalaps and cordials. "Poor gentleman, a liver complaint, no doubt; but a strong cup of camomile tea of a morning—"

"A stiff glass of summut overnight is more like to do him good," answered Joe, with a mechanical movement towards the bar.

"And the poor dear child?" inquired the considerate Mrs. Hanway, filling out a glass of pennyroyal, which the postilion bolted without hesitation.

"I thought," said he, making a face, "that it was a go of thunder and lightning; but that's my luck."

At this juncture honest Jonas returned from the stable-yard, and inquired as to the locality of the travellers, who, in the meantime, by virtue of a temporary residence, were enjoying the right of common.

"About a quarter of a mile off, more or less," answered Joe; "but there's no needs of hurry—I'll warrant the horse they've got with 'em for a quiet un, cause why, he's dead, and the windows is all up and only one broke—they can't be more comfortable considering, whether I takes a little drop of summut or not;" so saying, the postillion, like a new member of Parliament, took his place with an oath, and couldn't be persuaded to vacate his seat till he had accepted something equivalent to the Chiltern Hundreds. His appetite and thirst satisfied, he set forth, accompanied by boots, ostler, and pot-boy, though in all but a pair, for the last three offices were monopolized by one individual; they took with them a spare horse, and a bottle of something against the night air, from Mrs. Hanway, for the especial use of the invalid, and which, be it said, went undiminished by a single drop to its destination.

By this time the wind had become somewhat "blown and scant of breath," only "roaring as gently as a sucking dove;" but although time's whole eleven upon the clock had been bowled out, each several member of the whist club seemed inclined to act as a long stop; a departure from their established rule which could only be justified by the expectation of post-chaise travellers at the Rabbits. They were longer than ever they were before in discussing their second tumblers, and several, encouraged by the example of the president himself, went even so far as to call for a glass beyond their ordinary stint; the third tumbler despatched, they were slower than ever had been known in the appropriation of their peculiar greatcoats and hats, and far more careful than common in the adjustment of capes, collars, and silk-handkerchiefs. Armed at last at all points against weather, they were even then a thousand times more particular than they had ever been in their inquiries as to the state of the night; and sundry deputations made a brief excursion into the open air for the ostensible purpose of verifying the meteorological reports which they had received. In short they temporized as adroitly as diplomatists of a higher grade, for the attainment of an unavowed object. Fortune, however, which had denied them a game at long whist, afforded them, by way of amends, a protracted game of patience; for whether Joe had understated the distance, or had met with unforeseen obstacles, it was a full hour before his wheels rattled up to Jonas's Rabbit Hutch. In the mean time Mrs. Hanway had made the most precautionary preparations for the reception of guests who she understood had come from a hot climate into a cold one. Accordingly, as soon as the young gentleman

alighted, he was caught up in a warm blanket and carried kicking up stairs by the sturdy Jonas; the next comer, before he left the steps of the chaise, had a conservative handkerchief clapped up to his face by the considerate Mrs. Hanway; and as she thought proper to get him out of the damp air of the passage as quickly as possible, the gazers who lined the door of the club-room in expectation of seeing the stranger, caught only a momentary glimpse of a travelling cap, a bandana, and a blue cloak—followed by a treacle posset and a warming pan.

"Well," said the manufacturer of tombstones, as the effigy glided up stairs, "that's what I call 'sic transit;'" and with this remark he caught up his hat and sallied forth homewards with his neighbors of the village.

CHAPTER III.

"You cannot hunt to-day, to-day,
You cannot hunt to-day!—
But a hunting we will go!"

THOMAS ROUNDING

In the list of hunting appointments, as given in the County Chronicle, the meeting of the H——— Hounds for Saturday, the 20th of November, was advertised to take place at Windmill Grange, a fixture which brought the pack into the vicinity of Hanway's public house. The morning was beautiful for hunting, that is to say, what some people would have called rather muggy, with very little wind from the south, and a cloudy sky. Owing to this auspicious weather, the field was more numerous than usual, and the sportsmen welcomed with peculiar pleasure the first appearance for the season of their old friend and leader Sir Mark Tyrrel of Tylney Hall, the master of the hunt. During the last two months a martyr to the gout, though he would rather have been one of Fox's Martyrs, he had never mounted a horse. The woful case of Witherington in Chevy Chase was light compared with the Baronet's, who had thus four legs taken from under him, for, in reality, he was a modern Centaur. He did not, however, make as manful a flight as the bold Esquire in the ballad—like the ancient knights, he felt quite helpless when unhorsed, and, after a feeble struggle, surrendered himself quietly into the hands of Dr. Bellamy, the family physician. The Doctor, a formalist of the old school, was, like Ollapod, a great advocate for spring physic, and having vainly tried for some years past to persuade Sir Mark to go through a course of May medicine, seized with avidity on an opportunity for making him swallow the whole arrears in November. Accordingly, he drenched his patient so vigorously, that the latter began sometimes to doubt whether he had not better have called in the professional assistance of Master Burton, a practitioner whose prescriptions were administered by help of a pitchfork and a cow's horn. It is impossible to say how far he might have been eventually reduced, if he had not washed down every lowering draught with a large bumper of Madeira, in furtherance of which, his housekeeper, who was no friend to Sangrado, caused his gruel to become caudle, and his broth to be as like soup as possible:—the best way, she said, to keep the gout from flying to his stomach, was by filling it with something else. By a similar freedom his barley-water was rendered into Burton ale, and his composing draught into a bishop At last, on a Saturday morning, when the doctor called with the design of allowing a little air and gentle exercise in a garden chair, he was informed that his patient had suffered a relapse into health, and had gone off suddenly on Bedlamite, to meet the hounds at Windmill Grange.

The appearance of the Baronet at the rendezvous in buckskins at scarlet, and mounted on his famous gray horse, was hailed with more than one involuntary view halloo, notwithstanding such a sound was in the highest degree unseasonable, considering the time and place. The hounds had been already thrown into cover, and were drawing with admirable steadiness, and the silence of death, when the ill-timed welcome drew them all off, huntsmen, whippers-in, and company, to the sound,—to the infinite chagrin of all parties, brute or human; however, the pack was speedily at work again in the underwood, amongst which fifty vigorous tails were busily ranging, when another and still more unsportsmanlike shouting from the opposite side of the wood, drew the whole cavalry like a trumpet-call in that direction. In a moment the horsemen gained the spot from which the sound proceeded, and discovered a postboy on a tall, rawboned, piebald mare, who was floundering and struggling her way through a patch of gorse. The rider, who had never ceased his outcry, was immediately encircled by a score of horsemen, all opening upon him with the same question, of where he had seen the fox.

"An't please your honours," said the postboy, with a respectful touch of his hat, "it's any thing but varmint I have in my head at this present——" words which were barely pronounced when the astonished utterer found himself in the middle of a storm of whip-thongs, that assailed him like a foul wind from all quarters at once. Luckily for unlucky Joe, for it was no other than that butt of misfortune, he was mounted on a mare which had the vice of kicking in no ordinary degree, and, as some of the cuts designed for the rider fell upon the beast's crupper, she resented them in kind, by wheeling round and lashing out so vigorously, as greatly to enlarge the circle of her acquaintance. Favoured by this respite, Joe made shift to explain that he was charged with what he called a life and death letter to Sir Mark, at the same time holding up the missive as conspicuously as he could, and making a movement with his horse towards that personage, who stood a little aloof. The Baronet, however, who had heard the life and death character of the note, conceived at once that the messenger had come post from Dr. Bellamy, with a professional remonstrance against over-exertion and fatigue, and a special prescription of home, abstinence, and fleecy hosiery. Affecting, therefore, to be unconscious of his claim to the epistle, he set off in a walk towards the copse, with a well-feigned intentness on the movements of Jowler and Grasper, who were visible at the skirt of the cover. Hearing, however, the clatter of the post-horse behind him, he put Bedlamite into a trot, Joe at the same moment pricking his mare into a gallop; whereupon the wily fox-hunter, as if meaning merely to give the mettle of his steed a fillip, clapped spurs to his sides, and placed what he thought an impracticable hedge between himself and his pursuer. The postboy, however, was not to be denied, for a guinea had been paid him beforehand for the service, and "money," says the proverb, "makes the mare to go;" but doubly urged by gold and steel, she could not, any more than Joe, refuse the fence: they charged it together, gallantly, and the result was what the post-office would call "a general delivery" of himself, mare, letter, and all, at the feet of Bedlamite. The sportsmanlike spirit of Sir Mark was not proof against the thorough-going character of this feat. He immediately dismounted, picked up the letter, and broke the cover—the fox the next minute doing the same thing. A halloo, a burst of canine music, and a crash of timber instantly followed, but, instead of riding at the head of the field, the master of the hunt, to the utter surprise of the whole company, was seen going his best pace in the opposite direction. "By goles, Sir Mark is making a queer cast of his own," exclaimed a farmer, the only pedestrian on the ground; "it were

no runaway, for I seed un spur. I say, fellow," he continued, addressing Joe, who was busily groping about in a little hunt of his own amongst the furze—"there must ha' been a terrible strong drag t'other way, to draw a master of hounds off from his fox when he were just found."

"You don't see nothing hereabouts as didn't grow here, do you?" inquired Joe, by way of answer to the farmer.

"What may it be like, mun?" inquired the agriculturist in his turn.

"It was as like a goold guinea as ever you see in life," answered Joe, "afore it flew out of my jacket pocket; it's gone like conjuring! I wish I had never been paid aforehand, but that's my luck."

With this doleful reflection on fortune, her unhappy victim, bruised in body and spirit, took the bridle of the piebald mare, who, with streaming knees, limped after him at a snail's pace, to elucidate the meaning of "jump-short"* to her proprietor, Master Jonas Hanway.

In the mean time, Sir Mark, with the recklessness of a neck-or-nothing rider at a steeple-chase, galloped as the crow flies across the Flats; and clearing every thing in his way, flung himself off Bedlamite at the door of the Rabbits. The considerate Mrs. Hanway, with the overflowing carefulness which belonged to her character, had tied a muffler of leather over the knocker of a door which professionally stood ever open; and Pots, under the same direction, had scattered two trusses of straw over a road where wheels were almost as great a rarity as they are now-a-days in state lotteries. The Dutch clock in the tap-room no longer struck the hour, and the parlor bell rang only with the benumbed sound of a wine-glass when it is filled with liquid. The sign which had been so given to Æolian discord was taken down, and Jonas himself, at the desire of his spouse, had discarded his iron-shod high-lows, and minced awkwardly about in a pair of list slippers. As for Mrs. Hanway herself, she was quite in her element, invested with all the importance and mystery of an attendant on a sick chamber. Her face wore an unusual expression of grave anxiety, varied, however, occasionally, by a slight crumpling up of her features, which died again with the flavour of the various medicines, which she amused herself by sipping and tasting, preparatory to inflicting them on her patient. Strange to say, the tenderest of nurses seem to derive some peculiar gratification from the administration of physic. With wonderful gusto they shake up the nauseous sediment full before the eyes of the loathing expectant. With a very unnecessary noise and splash they pour the gurgling abomination, close under the ol factories, into the wine-glass or tea-cup, as if jalap, like porter, would be more acceptable with a fine head, and then gaze on the writhing features and rising gorge with a complacency perfectly unaccountable, except on that principle of Lucretius, that it is pleasant to stand by and look on an infliction which does not reach ourselves.

Mrs. Hanway, at the expense of her invalid, had revelled for some time in this nursing propensity, till human patience, revolting at last, refused peremptorily to honor her draughts; and in consequence she was compelled to find vent for her ruling passion amongst knockers, bells, and thick shoes, as already described. Above all she watched for a noise as diligently as a cat for a mouse, and whenever the most insignificant sound dared to be heard, she pounced upon it with her finger on her lips, and strangled it in its birth. Accordingly, the moment Sir Mark alighted at the door, she

* As some provincial dramatist may hereafter use this term, to the great perplexity of commentators it may be as well to say that the author once heard the commodity inquired for in the shop of a butcher at Upwell, in Norfolk, a vicinity abounding in fens, intersected by broad ditches or drains, occasionally fatal to the sheep who attempt to spring over them. The drowned mutton, under the name of "jump-short," at a reduced price, was in request amongst the poor.

put his very first question asleep with an emphatic "hush!" and then laying her lips to his ear, favoured him with an inaudible answer. Awed by this beginning, the Baronet suffered himself, like one of the deaf and dumb, to be telegraphed up stairs into what is called the best bedroom, and coming suddenly out of the broad light of day into a gloom mitigated only by the slender ray which crept through the mere cracks of the shutters, the firelight even being studiously screened off, he felt for some bewildered moments as if blindness was added to his other bereavements. At last a voice which he could scarcely hear called him by name to the bedside, where a form he could barely see clutched him feebly round the neck, and for some time held him in a silent and tremulous embrace. The voice again made an attempt to speak, when suddenly the hands unclasped, and the body fell back with a death-like helplessness on the pillow.

"He's dead, woman—he's dying!" shouted the agitated Baronet;—"let me see the last of my brother!" and tearing down a curtain with each hand as he spoke, he endeavored with fixed eyes to pierce the thick gloom which hung before him.

In obedience to the command, Mrs. Hanway opened one solitary leaf of the shutters, but which by chance allowed a partial stream of light to fall upon the bed, and disclosed a sight that rendered the gazer almost as insensible as the being before him. The letter he had received, the few words of the invalid himself, had led Sir Mark to believe that he was about to see a brother; but when he was able to distinguish the face of the sufferer, he beheld with unspeakable horror the countenance of his father, at whose death-bed he had stood and wept some ten years before.

CHAPTER IV.

"This very doctor frankly owns that he does not cure the distempers which are already formed, but only prevents their formation; and the medicine he prescribes is fasting upon fasting, until the patient is clean skin and bones, as if a consumption was not worse than a fever."

SANCHO PANZA.

To account for the awful phenomenon recorded in the last chapter, it may suffice to refer those who have often looked on their kindred after death to their own experience. Such persons, in gazing on the rigid marble features of the departed, must have been sometimes struck by a startling likeness of the corpse to some branch of consanguinity, more or less remote; thus proving, by a resemblance never recognizable during life, the fidelity of the family mould. Attenuated, perhaps, by disease, and further sharpened by the contractions of the flesh and muscles after death, the features assume an expression sometimes entirely different from that of the same countenance when living, and the spectator becomes unexpectedly aware that former dissimilarities in physiognomy arose merely from the variances of flesh and fibre. The mortal change moreover sometimes reduces the disparities of age, making the old apparently younger, and the young older—so that the father and son, mother and daughter, appear in each other's likeness with an identity perfectly astounding to the beholder.

The Baronet, therefore, only saw a countenance on which care, an unwholesome climate, and premature old age, had anticipated the hand of death, and worked out the resemblance which had given such a shock to his feelings. To add to the ghastliness of the marble face of the invalid, each closed eye was encircled by a deep tinge of livid blue, the effects of a disproportionate dose of laudanum, which the officious but well-meaning Mrs. Hanway had introduced over night in his gruel. To the infinite relief of Sir Mark, the sufferer, who had merely fainted from over-exertion

and agitation, shortly unclosed his eyes, and with returning animation the likeness to his parent in some degree faded away. To describe what followed, would require a more graphic implement than the pen, for much of the first communion between the brothers consisted in embraces and mute tokens of recognition—neither having command enough of voice to discourse. The invalid was the first to speak.

"I have brought home my bones at last," he murmured, "though only to lay them in the family vault."

"God forbid, Herbert," replied the worthy Baronet, grasping somewhat too heartily the emaciated hand that was held out to him. "But keep up your heart, and you'll give the old enemy a few winds and doubles afore then. Many a man's been as low in the flesh, and yet been got into condition by help of good keep and his native air. We'll have you on your legs again by next grass."

"It will wave over me, Mark," returned the other, with a faint shake of the head; "and as for my native air, it has shortened the few days I had to live by its keenness and violence last night. Lungs that have panted and decayed near the tropics, will be ill able to encounter the cutting blasts of an English winter."

"We'll have Dr. Bellamy to 'em," rejoined the over-sanguine Baronet. "Whatever he may be at gout, I'll back him for a known good hand at a thickness o' the wind. I remember being a bit of a high blower myself, and as they said, by riding through Willow Brook, instead of going round by the bridge—"

"If the gentleman's lungs is touch'd," interrupted Mrs. Hanway, "there's nothing worse than talking and letting the air into 'em. It's what Dr. Bellamy's most strict in; and when his patient is so unprudent as to ask what's the matter with 'em, and what the medicine's meant to do—and if he's met with the like case afore, and such like, he never answers a single question. But thank goodness, here comes Dr. Bellamy to prescribe for himself."

In fact, a very unnecessary and prolonged double knock at the door, which to a hypochondriac might have suggested a funeral roll of a muffled drum, here announced the physician, whose foot, by no means shod with felt, was soon heard ascending the stairs, while a pompous voice, in a tone far above a whisper, maintained a running conversation with some one at the stairfoot. We will venture a description of the disciple of Galen. At first sight you were in doubt whether to set him down as a doctor or a pedagogue, for his dress presented one very characteristic appendage of the latter; namely, a square-cut black coat, which was not, never would be, and probably never had been, in the fashion. A profusion of cambric frill, huge silver shoe-buckles, a snuff-box of the same metal, and a gold-headed cane, belonging rather to the costume of a physician of the period. He wore a very precise wig of a very decided brown, regularly crisped at the top like a bunch of endive, and in front following the exact curves of the arches of two bushy eyebrows. He had dark eyes, a prominent nose, and a wide mouth, the corners of which, in smiling, were drawn downward towards his double chin. A florid colour on his face hinted a plethoric habit, while a portly body, and a very short thick neck, bespoke an apoplectic tendency. Warned by these indications, prudence had made him a strict water-drinker, and abstemious in his diet—a mode of treatment which he applied to all his patients, short or tall, stout or thin, with whom, whatever their disease, he invariably began by reducing them, as an arithmetician would say, to their lowest terms. This mode of treatment raised him so much in the estimation of the parochial authorities, that, with their usually economical tenderness toward the poor rates, except when vestry dinners were concerned, they unani-

mously conferred on him the appointment of parish doctor, under a well grounded conviction that, in his dietetic prescriptions, he would never over-pamper the pauper bodies confided to his care. His deportment was characterized by a profusion of ceremonious bows, and set complimentary phrases, borrowed, probably, from some antiquated code of manners tha he had studied in his youth, and which he delivered with such pomp of emphasis and set solemnity of face, that the dignified title of Dr. Bellamy invariably degenerated, behind his back, into the more popular alias of Old Formality. Such was the personage now introduced to the sick chamber, where he stood bowing profoundly to Sir Mark; whom he was somewhat surprised to see on his feet.

"Egad, Doctor," exclaimed the Baronet, "you have hunted me down at last, though how you hit upon the foil—"

"I had the pleasure," said the Doctor, "of seeing Bedlamite at the door;" and the animal, if he had been present, would doubtless have come in for a congee.

"Sir Mark, we must get you home instantly, and put you to bed. What further measures may be necessary to expel the gout from your stomach—"

"Expel the devil," said Sir Mark, in a vehement whisper. "I'm as well as ever I was in my life. You've overrun the scent, man,—your patient, Doctor, lies yonder."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said "Old Formality," bowing afresh to the dimity furniture of the bed, from which the voice of the invalid was heard.

"Mark, if you love me, give the worthy Doctor no trouble on my behalf; I am past human help. I have prayed but to live for one purpose, which is all but accomplished—send for my son."

At this moment the gruff voice of Jonas Hanway was heard in altercation with that of a boy, accompanied with a sound of scuffling, which approached nearer and nearer to the room, till eventually the door was flung open, and a youth darting suddenly in, cast himself on the bed by the side of the invalid. For a few minutes there was a dead pause, broken only by the sobbings of the intruder, whom the parent endeavored to compose from time to time, by a feeble caress. Sir Mark in the mean time seated himself on the other side of the bed, and grasped the left hand of the boy, who his heart told him was his nephew.

"I know, brother, what you mean," said the warm-hearted Baronet; "he shall be as a son of my own—he shall be all one with Ringwood and Raby; he shall be as one of our own—he shall, by G—." The invalid made no reply, but by raising himself on his elbow towards the speaker, and for a minute the two brothers seemed to look into each other's soul. At last a languid smile passed over the features of the younger, and with a faint nod of acknowledgment he composed himself again on the pillow, where his eyes closed and his lips moved, as if in mental thanksgiving.

The scene was of such interest, that Dr. Bellamy and Mrs. Hanway, the only persons present who had "the gift of tongues," were subdued into silence; at last the respiration of the invalid was only indicated by the feeble and irregular heaving of the bed-clothes.

"Thanks be to Providence," said Mrs. Hanway, "he is composing himself to sleep; we must trust him a while to nature, and he shall have something composing as soon as he wakes."

"I shall have the pleasure of sending a soporific," said the Doctor, "as soon as I get home."

"And he shall take it," added Mrs. Hanway, "if I wake him up on purpose."

Sir Mark, whose plain common sense had detected the approaches of sleep, in the meantime drew the boy by gentle violence from the bed, and led him from the room, followed by Dr. Bellamy, leaving Mrs. Hanwa

nothing loth, in charge of the sick chamber. As they descended the stairs, the Baronet, in a melancholy tone, addressed the Doctor.

"I am afraid, Doctor, you have come up too late to stop the earth my poor brother is going to."

"I have the honor of entirely coinciding with your opinion," returned the obsequious physician. "It is evident the patient has enjoyed a plethoric habit, inducing diversion of the gastric juices, derangement of the whole nervous functions, attended with febrile symptoms, decay of the vital energies, and all the other concomitants of a disorganized constitutional system. Palliatives, Sir Mark,—palliatives are all we can administer. In the course of an hour I will again pay my respects to the case, and ad interim I shall have the honor of exhibiting a few grains of opium to the pillular form." With these words he took up a huge quaker-like hat, and making a ceremonious bow, intimated to the Baronet that he had "the pleasure of bidding him good-morning."

CHAPTER V.

"Some of these second-sighted persons will pretend to see a funeral, and bespeak the death of the individual who is shortly to occupy a hearse."

TOUR IN THE HIGHLANDS

"ASKING your honour's pardon," said Jonas, meeting the Baronet at the door of the parlour, "the young gentleman's coming up was no fault of mine. Mrs. Hanway thinks that people as is to part for ever had better be separated, and I had him confined to the bar, but he begged so to see his papa afore he died, that I hadn't the heart to refuse him, and particularly as he kicked and bit quite astonishin' for his age—please to walk this way," he continued, waving one hand toward the parlour; "as the whist club is apt to get noisy, and sick people don't agree with loud singing, I have got 'em to dissolve themselves for a week."

"I'll make it all up to you, Jonas," said the Baronet, "whist club and all. And as for the boy, he may stay with us. Why as I live," he exclaimed, examining for the first time the face of his nephew, "he's of a cross breed, he's as brown as Gipsy Jack!" The boy thus referred to instantly plucked his hand from the Baronet's, and with a quick movement of resentment turned away a face in which red had now the mastery, while his eyes glistened almost fiercely through the springing tears.

"Come, come," said Sir Mark, laying his broad hand with an encouraging slap, but which might have served for a corrective one, on the youth's shoulder; "what I said about the skin was only for the sake of giving tongue—a good horse can't be of a bad colour."

"The best I ever set behind was a brown one," remarked Jonas, "let alone a fault in his temper."

This unlucky illustration, though adduced in perfect innocence by the ex-coachman of Sir Theodore Bowles, was taken as a pointed allusion by the impetuous Creole, who instantly discharged the first object at hand at the astonished utterer. The missile happened to be the old-fashioned domino box of the Whist Club. But passion had misdirected the aim, and its violence fell on "Unlucky Joe," who at that moment entered the club-room to break the broken knees of the piebald mare to the publican. The narrative, however, died still-born, for the box struck him full in the mouth, the shock scattering the whole stock of bony counters, like a shower of loosened teeth. The poor postillion instantly clapped both his hands to his mouth,

and for some minutes seemed to be suffering under the operation of some wheelwright who had undertaken the part of Cartwright at a short notice.

"It's ruffinly usage, so it is," he exclaimed as soon as he could speak, "and it's what nobody but me would have taken quietly; when accidents happen, as I'm too poor to stand the damage, it's always took out in kicks. I was goin' to ax pardon about the mare, but now Master Hanway we're quits." At the mention of this, Jonas bolted off the nearest way to the stable. In the mean time the Baronet recognised the features of the sporting post-boy who had hedged off the piebald mare at Windmill Grange.

"If I recollect right, my lad, I owe ye a trifle for postage, and something besides for my nephew's mishap with the box of dominoes, for its was no shot of Jonas's; but I must give it you some other time," he added, thrusting first one hand and then the other into the pockets of his buckskins, but which, in his haste to escape from Dr. Bellamy, he had forgotten to furnish.

"It's like my luck all over," muttered the fatalist to himself, as he left the room, "my misfortunes is paid down on the nail; but for a bit of a godsend, I'm obliged to give tick."

The Baronet thus left to the company of a sullen boy, with whom he did not care to make the first advance towards conversation, looked round the room for something to divert his thoughts with, but after a vain search was compelled to give himself up to his own cogitations; he had just taken one elbow chair and lifted his legs upon another, when through the parlour door, which remained open, he saw Jonas re-enter and pass towards the bar, followed by a little dapper rosy-faced man in black; a jingling of glass ensued, and then an audible smack of the lips, in token of the relish of the libation. To the dialogue which followed, the Baronet became unavoidably a listener.

"It's capital, Master Hanway, capital! worth a whole pint of the poor stuff at the Bell."

"I have it straight from the distiller's, Master Naylor; when one wants good unadulterated liquor, there's nothing like going to the fountain-head."

"Aye, aye, Master Hanway, but at the Bell, you know what I mean, they're apt to go to the fountain-head rather too much. Spirits, as I says sometimes to a taker-on, spirits won't bear too much lowering. The society's very grumpy about it, I assure you; very grumpy indeed."

"That's to say, the society for people as want to be buried?" inquired the voice of the landlord.

"The very same, Master Hanway, and though I say it, as should'nt say it, being president of the club, as snug and merry a little free and easy as you'd wish to be interred by. Only two guineas a year including mutes, bearers, feathers, and the best pall, with everything agreeable. You couldn't bury yourself for the money. The liquors is but so so, as I have said before, but the Bell mayn't always be our funeral-bell, as we call it by way of a joke. There's more houses to meet at in the place, and as I told the landlord t'other day, we're not screwed down."

"I've heard the Black Horse very well spoke of," remarked the disinterested host of the Rabbits.

"No, no, Master Hanway, we've black horses enough of our own. But that's by way of a joke. However, as I said before, the Bell don't answer, and as I says to the members, if so be we are to shift our tressels, we may as well pitch them again among friends. Now there's my old neighbour and crony Dick Tablet belongs to a society, and for old acquaintance sake I should prefer to club our clubs together at the same sign."

"And that's the very sign you're now drinking at," rejoined the voice of honest Jonas, with some eagerness. "The Whist Club and the Rabbits has pulled together these fifteen years, and I make bold to hope will keep

step for as many more to come. For, as Master Tablet says jokingly, every Friday, as long as I don't shuffle 'em, they'll never cut me."

"They'd never better themselves if they did, Master Hanway; the liquors at this house is capital, if they are like the Cogniac. And then as to the extensive prospect, as I said before, the Bell's a fool to it. By-the-by, talking of prospects, what a wonderful pleasant look out you must have, Master Hanway, from the windows of your best bed-room."

"Pretty enough in summer, Master Naylor, when there's any grass and a few lean beasts upon the Flats. But it's a melancholy prospect for him as now lies there with his last shutters shut."

"I never observed 'em, Master Hanway, never, upon my word, or it wouldn't have become me to stand here saying things by the way of joke, and a change expected in the house. But such is our memento moris in this world. Here am I, as we may say, in the vanity and pride of life, and a Baronet's brother dying by inches over my head."

"It's no slow work, Master Naylor, it's next thing to sudden death. His consumption, as Mrs. H——— says, has broke into a gallop, and he'll go down like a shot. Old Formality, Dr. Bellamy that is to say, has just timed him, and says his last stage will be done within the hour."

"We're cut off, Master Hanway, like the flowers of the field. Here to day — gone to-morrow — all flesh is grass. It's what we must all come to. Our breath was given to be took away again. Such is the common lot. We're all mortal, no one can call to-morrow his own, but death must pay the debt of nature. Dust we are, and to dust we must return. Such being the case, Master Hanway, delicacy in course forbids introducing the burial society into the house till after the obsequies. In the mean time you will oblige by presenting my dutiful inquiries to Sir Mark, or may be by sticking my card up on the mantlepiece, or in the frame of the looking glass, or any where prominent where sure to be seen. It will be a hearse and six, and a lead coffin in course, as before. I had the pleasure of performing to the late Baronet."

"I'll cram your undertaking card down your own d——d throat, and perform your own body to the horsepond," thundered a voice from the parlour, and the sentence had hardly been passed when the culprit found himself in the hands of the executioner. "Ar'n't you ashamed," he continued, "to stand croaking over a fellow creature as if he was so much carrion?" And a shake accompanied the words that threatened to divest the human raven of his dingy plumage, and at the same time shivered the first word of his apology into a demi-semiquaver. To render the finale more operatic, the quavering ended by the violent bolting out of a lower note, followed by a melo-dramatic stagger of the performer, the whole length of the passage; concluding, as the pantomime always comes last, with a clown-like plunge of his head into the stomach of Master Tablet, whom fate had just brought to the door, with his own card of obliging inquiries."

"Gog's nouns! Master Naylor," exclaimed the stonemason, as he recovered his breath and equilibrium, "it's early hours of the day, for a man to be losing his legs." Another moment however sufficed to convince him that the undertaker was quite able to walk, and with some celerity. A whisper from Jonas, with a side glance at Sir Mark, speedily explained the mystery, whereupon Master Tablet instantly faced about, without calling for his morning draught, and left the Rabbits as though it had been a whist night, without playing a card. For another twenty minutes, the Baronet was left in the parlour to his own companionship, his nephew having taken advantage of the fracas to escape up stairs to the chamber door, where he lay couchant like a leopard. At last the usual noise announced the return of Dr. Bellamy, whose presence for the first time was welcomed by Sir Mark as a thing to be desired. While the worthy Doctor, with a delibera-

tion peculiarly appropriate to the place and the occasion, divests himself of his broad-brimmed hat, and his gloves, his spatter-dashes, his riding coat and his comforter, we will take the liberty of presenting a case of one of the most curious phenomena in the mysterious world of dreams.

Contrary to the received opinion, that sleep, as a mirror, reflects back merely the predominant images of the waking mind — it more frequently happens that the imagination, released from the control of the external senses, flies, with a truant spirit, to scenes and deeds as remote as possible from those of its daily bondage. The night-cap is its cap of liberty. On this principle the felon in the condemned cell — during that awful season, when, contrary to the calendar of time, the shortest night and the longest are within a few hours of each other — instead of erecting visionary scaffolds, haunted by a horrible phantasmagoria of the demons of crime and remorse, instead of withering under fiend-like impersonations of shame torror, scorn, and human vengeance, be wanders through woods dear to boyhood, or angles placidly in some well-remembered stream, with thoughts as pure and calm as its lucid waters. Even thus, in lieu of dallying "with graves, and worms, and epitaphs," the discursive fancy of the sleeping invalid mounted with him like the pilgrim's vision from "the Valley of the Shadow of Death," to the Delectable Mountains of health, youth, and vigour. He was again a gallant soldier, bounding over the field of glory on a war-horse, gifted with an elasticity and power, exalted, by the soaring phantasy, to a pitch somewhat supernatural. Anon "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream:" he was disgraced for some undefined crime, and fallen under the extreme sentence of a court-martial. The troops were drawn up, the sentence was read, the firing party took their station, the command was given, the volley roared, and the victim awoke — the rattle of the musketry, by a marvellous phenomenon in dreaming, coinciding exactly with the thundering double-knock of the physician.

The Doctor, followed by Sir Mark, had accordingly reached only the middle of the stairs, when he was met by Mrs. Hanway, who, with a self-complacent smile, informed him that the patient "had woke again quite charmin', and had himself expressed that a change had taken place for the better."

"I am proud to say I expected as much," replied Old Formality; "and the efficacy of the pills I have had the honour to prescribe," he added, bowing to Sir Mark, "affords me, in this case, a peculiar gratification."

At the mention of pills Mrs. Hanway uplifted her hands and eyes with a significant expression, which, luckily for the Doctor, escaped his notice. Little, indeed, did he dream that the Mercury of medicine had encountered, in a by-road, a junior messenger of the Post Office, as much disposed for a little relaxation as himself, and that the pills in question had been driven out of the ring of memory by those heavier marble boluses which, in the school-boy's vocabulary, are called alleys and taws.

CHAPTER VI.

"In a fortnight, or three weeks," added my Uncle Toby, smiling, "he might march."

TRISTAM SHANDY.

ON entering the sick chamber the visiters found an alteration in the appearance of the patient, that seemed fully to justify Mrs. Hanway's bulletin; his cough had entirely ceased, there was a slight tinge of red on his cheek, and his eyes sparkled even lustrously, as if life, by a successful rally

at the very close of the mortal contest, had obtained an unexpected victory. He was sitting up in bed, supported by pillows, one hand in the possession of his son, who covered it with kisses, the other was taken without opposition by Dr. Bellamy, who applied himself with great ceremony to the pulse, and after a solemn pause of two minutes he intimated, by a smirk and a nod to Sir Mark, that the verdict was favourable.

"God be praised," ejaculated the Baronet. "Egad, Doctor, let me alone for a judge. I told you he was full of running. Herbert, my boy," he continued, grasping the hand which Old Formality had resigned, "how d' ye ye find yourself?'

"Better, Mark — better, beyond conception. I feel a lightness and free dom from suffering, such as I have not experienced for many a long day."

"Hark to him, Doctor," cried the delighted Sir Mark; "hark to Herbert! he's twice the voice he had in the morning. He's got his second wind. He'll give old boney the slip — he will by Jove:" and his rising exultation outstripping his powers of eloquence, he vented his hilarity in a way as natural to him as breathing, namely, by a subdued but triumphant yoicks!

"My narcotic pills have done wonders, most assuredly," replied the Doctor, "though at the same time I must confess myself under some obligation to the excellence of the constitution I have had the honour to assist;" and the bed again received a bow worthy of that old school of manners which polished Sir Charles Grandison.

"With the Doctor's permission, Mark, I will be moved up to the Hal. to-morrow — I feel quite equal to the exertion, indeed, if it were necessary, I should not hesitate to undertake the removal this evening?"

"With all deference, Sir, to your own feeling of ability — which I beg leave to say I do not at all dubitate in the least — yet in the responsible character of a medical adviser I feel called upon to decline forming a decided opinion for the present. In the evening I shall again pay my respects to the disease, and in the mean time we will prescribe a febrifuge, which I shall be infinitely obliged by your taking every half hour; with regard to dietetics, I will instruct the good woman of the house — Mr. Herbert Tyrrel, I am your most obedient — Sir Mark, I am your very devoted." Two twin boys followed, and the physician again descended the stairs with the noise peculiar to persons of his stamp. Mrs. Hanway interrupted him at the bottom, and had ample time to receive her instructions, while helping him on with his very complicated defences against weather.

"No solids, Mrs. Hanway, nor much liquid — and, above all, no stimulants;" was the summary of the charge.

"Not for the world, Doctor," exclaimed Mrs. Hanway, "we've no stimulus in the house," so saying she dropped a low curtsey and returned to the bar to complete the beating up of the yolks of two eggs with a large bumper of port.

The doctor on his cob, a sort of roan compounded of rhubarb and magnesia, and which neither galloped, trotted, nor cantered, but had a pace of its own made up of all three, had barely cleared a quarter of a mile when the voice of Sir Mark was heard overhead shouting — "Stop him! for God's sake head him back — halloo to Dr. Bellamy!" But the Doctor, muffled up all but the peak of his nose, was already far beyond the reach of lungs more stentorian than those of Mrs. Hanway. She however gave three heron-like screams to the desert air of the Flats, and according to her own motto of "be prepared for the worst," she rushed up stairs, armed with a bunch of feathers and a phial of sal volatile. The patient, however, when she entered the room, seemed beyond her aid: he was lying on his back, his hands firmly clenched till the knuckles started out like marbles, his eyelids closed together forcibly within a deep hollow, his cheeks sunk, while his lips were

so tensely drawn that the teeth appeared with a ghastly prominence. It was indeed the very aspect of a corpse, for though not dead, his features had undergone that prophetic alteration which is expressed by the popular phrase of being "changed for death." The treacherous appearances which had so rejoiced Sir Mark, and had deceived Dr. Bellamy himself, had originated only in that transient elevation of spirits alluded to by Romeo —

> How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry? which their keepers call
> A lightning before death.

In such a case the sparkle of the eye is but as the upflashing of an expiring taper; and the rosy forgery of health upon the cheek resembles only those ruddy sunsets portending gloom and tears. Thus the corporeal reaction became suddenly evident by an alarming swoon, from which with great difficulty the sufferer was recovered. At last he unclosed his eyes and gazed around him as wildly as if they had opened on another world.

"Indiana," he exclaimed, riveting two eager orbs of a startling brilliancy on the face of the horror-stricken Mrs. Hanway, "wherefore are you here? take her away — pull her off me, quick;" — and his arm waved impetuously. — "She has a knife!"

"His head is going," whispered Mrs. Hanway to Sir Mark; "it is time to send for the clergy."

"Remove the boy," continued the strong wild voice of delirium; "he must not see me bleed — his mother did it."

"Ah, papa! dear papa! don't send me from you — pray don't," sobbed the terrified boy, struggling with all his might to retain the hand which the invalid, with that fitful strength which belongs to frenzy, disengaged by a single effort.

"Away, woman," he cried, "don't cling to me; away — out of my sight — we part for ever!"

A long pause of exhaustion succeeded, during which his eyes gradually became duller, and when he spoke again, it was with a tone so altered, so feeble and mild, that it seemed as if two distinct spirits with their several voices inhabited the same body.

"I am going, Mark, going rapidly; the grave is closing round me — I am dead to the waist. Come nearer, Mark — nearer still;" the Baronet placed his ear close to his brother's lips, and actually staggered backward as the appalling supernatural voice, abruptly resumed, fell with full force on the astounded sense. "Don't hurt her," it shouted, "she's mad — mad with jealousy! Indiana, you had no cause for this!" and the intense bright eyes again fixed themselves on the countenance of Mrs. Hanway, who, in an agony of undefinable terror, sunk on her knees and shrouded herself in the curtain.

"In the name of God, Herbert," said the bewildered Sir Mark, "if you have anything on your mind, make a clean breast of it. If it's about the boy, I've sworn to back him through this world, and while I live I'll ride with him round the course." The invalid for a moment gazed on his brother, as if without comprehending his words; but the caresses and sobs of his son recalled a spirit which seemed already hovering between earth and heaven.

"He loves me as fondly as his mother did," said the dying parent, with a voice again feeble and tremulous; "but his temper has some of her tropical fire, which, as a last injunction, I conjure his future father to repress."

"Make your mind easy, Herbert," said the Baronet, "he's a mettlesome colt, I know, but I'll drive him at the lower bar. I wish the Almighty had pleased to leave the reins in your own hand; but his will must be done;

since our hopes are come to this check, and we must part, all we can do is to look forward to a better place. If you would like to have the curate to ease your mind———"

"I feel no more misgivings," answered the dying man, "than a Christian ought on the brink of an unknown world. I have my hopes and my fears — there are dark clouds and bright clouds before me — and they both blind me alike." His voice now sunk so suddenly as to be scarcely audible, but he made a sign to his child and his brother, who stooped down to receive his last embrace. "God bless — both," he whispered, "Indiana — I forgive all — Walter, don't cry — we shall soon — be — in England." The sound ceased with a long-drawn sigh. The dying man fixed his last look full upon Sir Mark, who, as he gazed on the motionless eyes before him, saw the transit of life as visibly as if a taper had been removed suddenly from behind each window, so called in Scripture, of the human soul.

CHAPTER VII.

"Come, come—the pills! where are the pills? produce them!"
THE HONEYMOON.

As soon as the breath nad left the body, Mrs. Hanway made a sign to Sir Mark to withdraw his nephew from the room, in order that the necessary duties might be performed to the corpse.

"Poor Herbert, he is gone at last, and God rest his soul!" he ejaculated, withdrawing his arm for ever, and by an agonizing effort, from under the inanimate head, which seemed now to retain it with a pressure of a ton of marble: "here am I older and more deserving to be cut off than poor Herbert — but the best always top the fence first into the other world. Thank God," he continued, taking the boy's hand into his own huge grasp, "he died easy, and in his own country, where he was roused, and his own friends in at his death, instead of being run into in the West Indies among a pack of heathens and blacks. But talking here is out of place, when melancholy duties are waited for;" so saying, he drew his nephew with some force from the bed, and led him down stairs to the parlour, where he began preaching composure and resignation to the weeping boy, in a discourse very different from that of a commonplace funeral sermon, but quite as worthy of publication.

"Come now," he said, "take heart a little, and consider what must be must. Your poor father is dead and gone, and now you must look up to me; if his run has n't been as long as some, he has, maybe, been saved a deal of distress and struggling on his last legs, and which is better than seeing him wearing out by inches, and death having him in view all the time. For my own part it comforts me to think I have shook his last hands and closed his last eyes, and shall be able to see him go to earth as a Christian ought, in the old family vault, with his own kith and kin. It seems hard, no doubt, to part company with those that are so dear to us, but it's so with one and all, whatever their pedigrees; for if death did n't draft off now and then out of all our breeds, the world would be overstocked: that's the order of nature. Such being the case, we should meet our misfortunes like men, instead of taking on and being noisy and babbling in our griefs, as if that would head him back again, and which is quite impossible. To be always trying back with repinings after what is lost and gone, is nothing but running counter in the sight of the Almighty, and likely to bring punishment on our backs for such a course. To be sure, when my own sire died, I gave tongue just as you do, and said I could not

lie over it; and yet here I am, rising fifty-four if I'm a day, and able to ride up to any hounds in the kingdom. As I said before, we must all die some day or other, and in consequence either we must all lose our fathers or our fathers must lose us, and Providence has wisely ordained that they should generally go first."

In this practical style of consolation the worthy Baronet continued for some time longer, till coming to a check, as he would have called it, from his words having overridden his ideas, he was compelled to hold hard, when he discovered that his nephew, overcome by grief, watching, and exertion, had fallen through mere exhaustion into a profound sleep. Taking advantage of the circumstance, Sir Mark stole away to the bar, and gave an order which brought Jonas's neat postchaise from ordinary into commission. By substituting a blue jacket for a brown one, doffing a white apron, and changing a pair of slip-slop shoes for top-boots, in about twenty minutes Pots, like an anagram, was transposed into Post, and sprang his four-wheeled rattle at the door. The youth still sleeping, was lifted into the vehicle, the Baronet followed, after a few instructions to Jonas, and thrusting his head out of the front window, gave the whispered direction "to Tylney Hall."

Just as the chaise departed, the landlady descended the stairs. "It's all over — it's all over, Mr. Hanway," she exclaimed, entering the bar somewhat hastily, and helping herself to a glass of one of her own restoratives.

"Poor gentleman," said Jonas, it's very sudden, but I said when I saw him, he was going down hill without the drag on; with his sufferings it's a happy release."

"A happy release indeed," echoed a voice from the kitchen, with a vehemence as if it enjoyed its exaltation from the low whisper to which all the tongues in the house had been subjected. "If it warn't a sin to rejoice over another's latter end I'd say a good riddance. What with making up slops, and broths, and gruels, and sagoes, and arrow-roots, and panadas, for one as won't eat 'em, and then having to live on 'em in the kitchen — for misses won't have anythin' wasted, — well, I've giv warnin' a hundred times, but now it shall be in arnest!"

To tell the truth, the speaker had but too much reason for such complaints, for Mrs. Hanway was one of those good managers who in modelling a figurative statue of economy, are apt to make both ends meet by allowing no waste. It is doubtful, however, whether Betty the cook would have ventured on such an audible statement of her grievances, if her courage had not been reinforced by something more potent than barley-water and apple-tea. Forewarned by hints from up-stairs, and signs quite as significant as death-watches, or tallowy winding sheets, or coffins out of the fire, she had ascertained that the sick gentleman would soon be a dead one, and with the vulgar instinct of selfishness, she immediately began to constitute herself his residuary legatee. First she administered to the old port that should have been beaten up with the yolk of eggs; secondly to the sherry intended to flavour the calves-foot jelly; thirdly, to the mountain provided for making a white wine whey; and then the Cogniac about to be burnt for a stomachic. Fifthly, she gulped down the sal volatile and water, which stood ready as a restorative; and finally, the ardent appetite increasing by what it fed on, she swallowed even the spirits of wine destined to be consumed with camphor, by way of precaution against infection. Inflamed by these various stimulants, her mind began to open, as an oyster does when subjected to unusual heat; and out flew the diatribe against the poor defunct gentleman, and his poor diet.

The unlucky words reached a pair of quick ears in the bar, and were not at all lost on the irritable Mrs. Hanway. She was in that peculiar mood to which some tempers are liable after agitation and excitement, when the

nerves are still vibrating and urging the possessor by way of vent to exertion or violence; in short she laboured under a fit of what is emphatically called the fidgets. Deposed suddenly from the active situation of head nurse to a living patient to the passive one of being custos of a corpse, she wanted something whereon to expend the surplus energies of mind and body; accordingly the obnoxious words were no sooner uttered than she rushed into the kitchen, and planted her face at bare toasting distance against the fiery visage of the cook, who stood balancing on two legs, not quite so steadily as a peg top does on one.

"Can I believe my ears," she asked in a vehement whisper, intended to preserve the due decorum of a house of mourning. — "Can I believe my own senses! — To dare to rejoice over a fellow creature's departure, and the corpse in the very house — I wonder, hussey, your own latter end did not fly in your face!"

"What I've said I've said," answered the cook doggedly, "and I an't a going to eat my words — no nor the sick messes and slops nayther, if it comes to that. So if you mean, Ma'am, to hold me to my warnin, you may Ma'am. As for my own dyings, I only wonder I'm alive this blessed day, so I do — what with your quack doctering and nosterums. They've been the real ruin of my precious health, that's what they have — the Lord forgive you!"

"O the wretch," ejaculated the indignant mistress, "to have no more gratitude. — This comes of my nursing, and proscribing you, and giving it with my own hands — only last Christmas, and snatching you back from death's door."

"Yes, Ma'am, — and well nigh chucked me in agen at the window," returned Betty, "thro' giving me so much cooling physic in the hard frosteses. My own mother that bore me would not have knowed such a bag of bones. Since I've been here I've swallowed whole pecks of pills as if they was nothing but green peas, and have took rubub enuff to turn me into a Turk. I can't bear it no more, and so, as I said before, if so be I'm to stay in the place, the physic must be put on the same futting as the tea and sugar — a guinea a year and find myself."

"You have never taken anything in this house," retorted Mrs. Hanway, "except for your good — and when your system wanted lowering, and for purifying the blood — and if you have been a little reduced or so, have'nt you had nourishing things and all sorts of support, provided it was light and easy of digesting?"

"My disgesting, Ma'am, thank God, wants no such lightening. I was noted from a child for a strong stomach, only it can't abide weak slops. Sago and sich is very well for the consumptious as lies in a sick bed, and hasn't got a hard place; but lawk help you, what's their works to mine, coughing and wheezing is one thing, and frying beef-steaks and inguns is another. If it warn't for my strong constitution, it's a miracle of miracles how I stand it — what with roast, and biled, and fried afore a great flaming fire, and in everlasting flurries and hurries, now this here pot biles over, then that ere fat ketches, and then the sut tumbles, and the dratted cat's at the drippin pan — and is a little wishy washy drop of barley-water the thing to cool and refresh one after the likes o' that — not that I'm going, Ma'am, to complain of what I was bred and born to, but only to takin more slops, and especially physic, than belongs to cookery, and my wages not riz thereby — to be sure the bottles would be summut, but arter one is doctored to death, who's to come to me up in heaven and say, There, Betty, there's the empty vials for your parquisites."

"Your perquisites indeed!" cried Mrs. Hanway, waxing in wrath, "a pretty speech truly; it's high time you left the Rabbits when you begin to

talk of perquisites — but you shan't stay another night in the house, no not an hour — perquisites indeed I 'll have you go this moment."

"What, this very moment Mam — this very dividual moment, this moment as I'm speaking Mam ?"

"Ay, hussey, this very moment, and the sooner the better."

"Why there then — I takes your warmin, and washes my hands o' my place" — and as she spoke, the unruly ruler of the roast deliberately relaxed her ruddy fingers, letting fall from one hand a saucepan of sago, and from the other a basin of arrow-root, as dab and suddenly as corporal Trim dropped his hat to illustrate his discourse upon death. Like the veteran she neither dashed them down, nor flung them, nor pitched them, nor jerked them, but let them go plump, as if apoplexy had given her notice to quit instead of Mrs. Hanway. The latter was not a woman to bear with wanton breakage. In fact the Tartar, as of old, began to rise on the ruin of China, but, luckily for the devoted cook, her fury was arrested by the appearance of a boy laden with a basket in the front passage; no other in fact, than the tardy walking dispensary of Dr. Bellamy.

Doctors' boys, like chimney-sweeps, universally run very small, and Old Formality's urchin really looked as stunted as if his board as well as his wages had been derived from his master's shop. Perched at a door in charge of the old-fashioned covered chaise, he looked actually like a periwinkle shrivelled in its shell. He had two little dark bolus-looking eyes, set squintingly in a long, pale, old face, in the middle of which stood a nose originally a pug, but made seemingly still pugger by its habitual turn-up at the nauseous freight that he commonly carried. His mouth had an appropriate screw-up of its own, as if hinting that he considered his place was to take out medicine, and not to take it in, while a chin of disproportionate length rested on a couple of linen dog-ears, which he called a collar. As for his livery, it was of a very decided blue, turned up with quite as decided a red, matching exactly the very colours of the two glass globes which by night glared over the Doctor's door — for as yet the chymists had not compounded those delicate tints, which in our days emulate the fashionable Parisian hues of eau de Nil, terre d'Egypte, and flammes d'enfer. Small as the imp was, however, his predecessor must have been smaller, for his clothes did not fit — his sleeves hung as distant from his sides as if he held an imaginary quartern loaf under each arm, and his knee breeches buttoned above his knee, his gaiters were an inch too short, and his shoes were as much too long, but were kept on by a liberal allowance of supplementary *tow* thrust into each extremity. Nothing else was big enough for him save his hat, which he kept from extinguishing his eyes by wearing his pocket handkerchief and two sheets of brown paper in the crown, as well as letting it rest on the collar of his coat behind, a collision which had given a truly clerical turn to the back of the brim. Gloves he had none, though, as far as appearance went, he scarcely needed them, his hands looking always too red or too blue to be taken for the natural skin.

"If you please, Ma'am," said the dwarf, fumbling out a small box from his basket, "if you please, Ma'am, I've brought the sick gentleman's pills."

The wrath of Mrs. Hanway was at its climax. Second only to the mortal sin which so horrified John Bunyan, she reckoned the inexpiable crime of letting a sick gentleman go to heaven without his physic. With indignant hand she seized a fleshy appendage, which, like a Corinthian volute, curled downward from the brim of the culprit's hat, and a caper instantly followed that strikingly proved how much the style in dancing depends on the ear of the performer. The step in this case was of a May-day character, consisting of alternate hops on each foot, pain and fright in the mean time compelling the dancer to let go his basket, which fell with a hideous crash, followed by the powerful aromas of squills and camphor, æther and

assafœtida, while a flood of mingled hue meandered along the floor, the acids and alkalies hissing at each other like enraged serpents.

"In the name of mercy, woman," cried Jonas from the bar, "what's the meaning of the uproar, what's the matter?"

"It's life and death's the matter," replied Mrs. Hanway, finishing off her discipline with a smart cuff on the ear, which made this real pill-garlic conclude his pas seul with a pirouette.

"She harn't no right to ill-use me, that she harn't," he bellowed, "she an't my mother."

"Let the poor fellow alone," cried Jonas; "if so be he runs restive, his own master can lay the whip into him a pretty deal smarter nor you can."

"A little villain," retorted Mrs. Hanway, "is people to go into the other world without their pills — and all through such a little divil as him?"

"The gentleman's dead and gone," returned Jonas, "and what signifies the pills — horse-balls would'n't 'a saved him."

"And let me tell ye, Mr. Hanway," retorted his spouse very sharply, "pills signifies a good deal when human lives is hanging like spiders' upon threads."

"That's true any how," said the unruffled Jonas, "and I'm thinking how many human beings 'll be cantering their last stages for want o' the draughts and mixtures you 've been upsetting of."

"I've been the upsetter of nothin' that can't be made good again, thank God, nobody's deaths can be laid at my door, — and I wish every other little wicked vagabond could say as much, there's other folks understands the matera medicus as well as Old Formality."

"The matera medicus will be all stopped out o' my wages," blubbered the boy, "and may be my head pestled and mortared into the bargain. I should like to know who's to find me any character when I 'm turned out neck and crop, from Dr. Bellamy's."

"To be sure it's only fair and reasonable," said the considerate Jonas, "we should give the boy a trifle towards the physical damage."

"I shall give no such fiddlesticks," said Mrs. Hanway very tartly, "the sick patients is all I looks to;" so saying she stooped down, and carefully gathered up the labels from the medicinal wreck, the directions on which she faithfully copied and appended to as many fresh phials, that she filled up with various draughts and mixtures of her own compounding, to the infinite relief of the dwarf, who thus saw an infallible remedy for what appeared a complication of incurable disasters. Promising faithfully to keep the secret, he set out cheerfully to deliver the nostrums at their respective destinations, and although one invalid had to take pennyroyal three times a day, instead of sarsaparilla, and another had a draught of peppermint in lieu of bark, while a third swallowed cammomile tea in place of syrup of squills — yet to the credit of Mrs. Hanway's practice, the patients did neither better nor worse than if they had swallowed the identical medicines originally prescribed.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A pretty pickle he'll put the house into; had he been master's own son, and a Christian Englishman, there could not have been more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call him."

THE WEST INDIAN.

ABOUT the same time that the doctor's boy departed from the Rabbits with his fresh cargo of medicine, the post-chaise entered the avenue which led to Tylney Hall, and was immediately descried by the sharp gray eyes of Mrs. Deborah, the antiquated housekeeper. She instantly gave a cry, as shrill and broken as that of an upright pencil hopping across a slate, invoking the presence of "Jere-miah! — Jere-miah! — Jere-miah!" She had been naturally voluble, but a tryste, as the Scotch call it, which she had held too faithfully for a faithless swain, was said to have been the cause of an affection of the lungs, which she now entertained in lieu of an affection of the heart. Neglected love had brought on a neglected cold, which had terminated in an asthmatic shortness of breath, that made strange havoc with her enunciation. As well as printing can typify her defect, her soliloquy ran thus: —

"Well as I hope — to be saved by Gemini—it's gone to his stomach and a post-chaise is coming up — the avenue he must be put to bed — that comes of going off — without his ale and hung — beef run up and warm the bed — Lord send him well through it — don't forget to put the kettle on his feet — as usual must be bathed with a sack posset — God be praised sir—" she panted as the chaise drew up, "at seeing your honour — safe between me and Dr. Bellamy — we may keep your legs from going to your inside."

"You're running breast-high after a red-herring," said the Baronet through the window, to the astonished Mistress Deborah, whose literal mind took the scampering after a Yarmouth bloater in good earnest, and made her have a misgiving, that the gout had flown into her master's head.

"You're running breast-high, after a red-herring," he repeated, "and must be whipped off. As for gout, you may draw every corner I have in my inside, and it will be a blank day after all, — but that's neither here nor there. As far as hunting goes I haven't had a single burst, let alone from Windmills Grange to the Rabbits, and then only to be in at the death of my own dear brother. You did'nt kill him, Dick, did ye?" he continued, abruptly addressing his huntsman, who presented an arm on one side of the chaise door.

"I'm d—d if we didn't," answered Dick, "and in forty minutes — he was chopt in a fuz."

"And this is his son," said Sir Mark, turning again to the house-keeper — and pointing to the Creole as he alighted.

"As like Mr. Herbert," panted Deborah, "as two pease biled — in the same pot with his very nose — his eyes are exactly like his mouth — and his chin — and every other feature — he's brownish to be sure and the Tyrrels — is all fair — but a little milk of roses — will remove a ship and a sea voyage — is apt to tan."

The brown face of the Creole at this speech assumed a tinge of scarlet, like poppies springing amongst ripe corn, but he contented himself with looking a box of dominoes at the housekeeper, and passed into the Hall.

"And now welcome to Tylney Hall," said the Baronet, taking and shaking his nephew's hand very heartily. "your home that is to be, you shall

have a room of your own, and a nag of your own, like Ringwood and Raby. Little Spitfire would be the very thing to carry you — and as to the dogs, you shall have any one you like, and the little single gun, provided you don't shoot the birds of season. As Deborah says, you're the very image of my poor brother Herbert; and I'll be a father to you for his sake; so you musn't fret and take on so, or you'll fall off in your feed and get out of condition, and may be go after him yourself, and it's our duty in such a case to hold hard in time. But the boys will put you in heart better than I can. If you're for hunting or shooting — I mean after the funeral — you'll find Ringwood as up to everything as Nimrod; and if you're bookish, there's Raby knows every volume in the library inside and out, and can tell you the performances of any author you like. I wish he could ride as well as he reads; but I've remarked through life, that sedentary people never have a good seat. Now your poor father's gone, we must comfort ourselves by thinking of his straight-going principle through life, and trust you will follow in his line without skirting. And Deborah shall send up the tray, for we musn't forget nature's wants, and to my knowledge you haven't been to rack or manger the whole morning." By this time they had arrived at the dining room, where the table had been already furnished, through the care of Mrs. Deborah, with a cold refection, in anticipation of some dozen guests, literally as hungry as hunters. The Creole, however, declined everything that was offered, declaring that he felt neither hunger nor thirst.

"Come, come, my lad," said the good-natured Baronet, putting a cold pigeon on his nephew's plate, "supposing your poor father to be looking down from above at this moment, he wouldn't object to our taking our meals. To be sure some animals when they lose their mates or their dams will waste and pine away, but then they're brute beasts and know no better: but for Christians to starve themselves to death on account of the dead is flying in the face of the Bible. It's an opinion of mine that nature is nature, and if a man is not properly sensible of hunger and thirst he can't be sensible of sorrow, or grief, or anything else in the way of feelings. For my own part I think grieving is very apt to go to the stomach, for I remember I never felt so sharp-set in my life as at my uncle Raby's funeral, what with the very slow pace and the north-east wind, and not knowing whether it would be decorum to have the coach windows up;" so saying, Sir Mark stuck his fork into a cold capon and was just beginning to illustrate his precept by practice, when Ringwood and Raby entered the room. They were both fine boys of thirteen and fourteen years of age, but considerably differing from each other in person and features. Ringwood was tall, robust, and florid, with curling brown hair and full bold-looking dark eyes. He had a frank open manner, laughed often, talked much with a loud but pleasant voice. The complexion of Raby, the youngest, was pale, except when he was excited, and then his face flushed all over like a girl's, and his dark hazel eyes flashed and sparkled through their long lashes. There was nothing of sickliness, however, in the appearance; his skin was clear and transparent, the flesh firm, the lips fresh coloured, possibly the blackness of his hair made him look pale, though, in reality, he was merely fair. He was as well made as his brother, but slighter in figure, and he had a dash of reserve in his address, and a voice rather gentle and low that accorded with his own pursuits and amusements, which were of a nature somewhat less boisterous than the field sports of Ringwood. The dress of the latter, indeed, bore evidence of his recent occupation, hard riding through deep lanes having spotted him, "like a pard," from head to heel, for he had but just come home with the pad of the fox which had gone away in the morning from Windmills Grange.

"Here, boys," said Sir Mark, and leading the Creole towards his two

sons, "I've brought home a new cousin to ye, so shake hands and take to him at once, he comes of your own blood, and I hope you feel it draw to him as I did. He's my own nephew by Herbert out of ——— out you can't remember your uncle Herbert, for he went abroad before you were born."

"Oh, yes," returned Ringwood eagerly, "and married a black woman, and she stabbed him, and Mrs. Hanway saw the scar when she laid out the body, and it bled whenever she said Indiana."

"The devil take Mrs. Hanway," said Sir Mark, "and whoever else opened on it, but only let a woman give tongue ———"

"It was not a woman, papa," interrupted Ringwood; "I had it from unlucky Joe, the post-boy. I met him riding home one of his master's horses, and he pulled up very civilly to tell me the news about the Rabbits and uncle Herbert, and that you were to come home in the post-chaise."

"And was that all?" said Sir Mark hastily.

"Nothing else, papa, only I gave him a shilling to drink"—here Ringwood laughed—"and he said he was the unluckiest chap in the world, and gave a sigh that would have turned round old Mudge's windmill."

"And not a word about Bedlamite?" asked the Baronet, in some alarm,—"I'd promised him a crown to bring him safe home to the Hall."

"Then as sure as I'm alive," exclaimed Ringwood, "it *was* Bedlamite that I saw at a distance, galloping over the Flats without a rider, only Dick offered to hold me a crown that it was no such thing, and he never bets, you know, except when he's as right as a trivet."

Had four carrion crows, at that moment, flapped at the window—had a spectral knacker's cart passed, or seemed to pass, across the room, or a warning hoof given three kicks at the door—had a dog's meat-barrow flown out of the fire—had an ominous glanders of tallow guttered down the side of the candle, while a death-watch of one-horse power simultaneously struck up its tic douloureux, the Baronet could not have had a stronger presentiment of the death of his favourite. By the help of his sons he pulled a grandsire peal of triple bobs on all the bells in the house, as well as the great one on the outside, which alarmed company to their dinner: at this extraordinary summons every domestic on the establishment, male or female, instantly put in an appearance, and in five minutes every man or boy that could ride was galloping off in the direction of the Flats.

CHAPTER IX.

"Wo worth the chase! Wo worth the day,
That cost thy life, my gallant gray!"

LADY OF THE LAKE.

An hour had scarcely elapsed when the Baronet, at about his sixtieth visit to the front window, perceived the huntsman returning, like a discomfited captain of horse, with the remnant of his company at his heels. As they came at a foot-pace up the avenue, both horses and men hanging their heads, indicating the bodily and mental distress under which they laboured, Sir Mark, with a qualm as if the gout had at last reached his heart, abruptly turned his back on the doleful cavalcade, but unfortunately was confronted with a large painting of Bedlamite which hung on the opposite wall. "Ay," he ejaculated, apostrophizing the picture, "I was offered a cool two hundred for ye this very morning; but it isn't the guineas I care for," he added, with a quivering voice, for the anticipated catastrophe not only unhorsed but unmanned him. His next glance fell on an object no less painful, a

noble silver cup and cover, the produce of a hunter's stakes, won by the same Bedlamite, but who was perhaps never to clear a hurdle again. Nor were these fears unfounded — Dick soon entered, stroking down his forelock with one hand, while the other brushed hastily across his eyes.

"It's a bad day's sport, your honour, if we had killed twenty foxes and never a vixen among 'em. Master Ringwood, I'm sorry to say your'n was the true bill, it was Bedlamite and nothing else we see'd galloping across the Flats. I'll warrant he heard the hounds when he bolted off, and so coming to the gravel-pits, your honour, for he never refused anythin' that looked like a leap, he went slap at 'em, clearing seven good yards on end if he springed an inch, and lighting after all on his feet. I never see such a sight in life since the crazy nursemaid that flinged herself out o' the garret window. He was struck up all of a heap like, with his legs jammed into his body. You'd have thought his whirl bones and stifles was a coming out at his lines."

"There's amen then," sighed the Baronet, "to the best hunter in England, whether as a goer or a fencer — I'd rather have put down five hundred guineas — but it's too late now, the breath's gone — poor fellow, I shall never see his like — d'ye mind Dick the purl he gave me at the oxfence with the ditch on t'other side, — but he'll never put out my collar-bone again."

"And please your honour," answered Dick, "exceptin' a bit of a snivel for my own father, I never knew what crying was till this blessed day. If he had died in the field after a hard run, it would have been a different matter, but to break his neck down a gravel-pit, and without a livin' soul on his back, is pitiful to think on. But I see Master Ringwood is beginnin' to wince, and so I'll say no more — but he'll be missed in the grooming to-morrow;" so saying, the huntsman gave what he would have called a cross between a nod and a bow, and if in opposition to a horse-laugh, there be such a thing as a horse-sigh, with that very kind of respiration he quitted the apartment. In the mean time, Sir Mark had commenced pacing up and down the room, his custom when he was much excited, and was muttering to himself in broken sentences —

"Ay, ay, a black day sure enough — first poor Herbert, and then the gray horse — the best brother — and the best hunter that ever topped a fence. But misfortune, as they say, always shoots right and left with a double barrel. Here's Bedlamite on one hand with a broken neck, and yonder's my own brother laid out for burying — seven good yards into a gravel-pit; as for that Joe lucky or unlucky, when I meet him, I'll ride over him — with his whirl bones and stifles coming out of his loins — God's will be done, but it's hard to bear — two deaths in one day — two deaths in one day."

To go back a little in our story while Hanway's post-chaise was preparing for the Baronet, the doomed postilion left the Rabbits mounted on the surviving post-horse belonging to his master, and leading Bedlamite by the rein. They had trotted however, barely a quarter of a mile, when whether he really heard any hounds, according to Dick's surmise, or whether he disdained the companionship of a post-horse — the high-spirited gray suddenly jerked the bridle out of Joe's hand, and dashed off across the heath at his very best pace. A few minutes sufficed to convince Joe of the futility of hunting a hunter on a spavined job-horse, and accordingly with his usual malediction on his luck and his birth, and another on all the gray horses in the world — he gave up the chase as one of those bad jobs for which he let himself out by the day, month, or year. Shortly after the mishap he encountered Ringwood Tyrrel, but could not muster courage enough to communicate what had happened, and subsequent to this meeting no person of the neighbourhood could remember having seen the fami

liar face of Unlucky Joe. The post-horse indeed, was found duly littered down in his own stall in his master's stable, but by whom he had been so replaced and attended was a profound mystery even to the ostler and helps at the inn. The well-known despondency of Joe's character induced his fellow-servants to drag the horse-pond and to examine the well, but they found nothing that could lead any one to believe that such had been "his luck."

In the mean time the carcass of Bedlamite, as a morsel too noble for crows or hounds, was carefully brought home, in order to undergo a formal interment, which it subsequently received under a mound in the Park, and Mr. Richard Tablet was commissioned to erect a monument on the site. As the worthy master mason had no architectural invention of his own, he literally copied his obelisk, cherubim and all, from a certain one in the village church-yard, to the memory of Mrs. Eleanor Cobb. Some persons wondered that he did not even copy the *Resurgam* of the original, instead of *Requiescat in Pace;* but as the village sculptor always pronounced *pace* as one syllable, it seemed to him the aptest inscription in the world for a dead horse.

CHAPTER X.

"Men must not be poor; idleness is the root of all evil; the world's wide enough, let them bustle: fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their INDUSTRY."

THE BEAUX STRATAGEM.

In due time the remains of Herbert Tyrrel were translated from the Rabbits to Tylney Hall, where they lay in state in the best bed-room,—the body being ceremoniously watched, day and night, by the domestics in rotation; although the guard was occasionally doubled, the females decidedly objecting to sit up all alone with a corpse, and particularly, as the dairy-maid remarked, "with a dead corpse which wasn't screwed down." In extenuation of such superstitious fancies, it must be remembered, that the lower classes of that day had not yet become penny-wise through the medium of Penny Magazines, but were still absolutely pound foolish on the subject of ghosts and goblins; nor was a country milk-maid then aware, as doubtless she is now, of the absurdity of a gentleman, of sedentary habits through life, taking to walk after death, like a two-penny postman.

Besides, the chamber in question was actually hung with some of the goblin tapestry of tradition. According to the domestic chronicle, the Tyrrels were descended from that same Sir Walter Tyrrel, whose arrow, aimed at a deer, slew the royal Rufus in the New Forest. The legend darkly hinted, that it was no chance shot that had glanced from a king's stag to a king's heart, and indeed the immediate flight of the regicide, and the apparently preconcerted facility of his escape into France, seemed to justify the inference. At any rate, it was matter of popular belief, that the best bed-room had been haunted ever since by the apparition of a crowned king, with a shaft sticking in his bosom; and by way of collateral evidence, certain huge antlers in the hall were said to have been the very identical horns of the stag that was missed.

In the mean time, the Baronet received daily and hourly cards or calls of condolence from persons, some of whom he knew by sight, some by name, and some by neither. If death is frequently guilty of severing relations and friends, he is as often the occasion of bringing them together; for, at a demise, many branches of a family meet and congregate, who but for such an occasion would most probably have never encountered for years. Then it

is that strange aunts, uncles, cousins, and demi-cousins, gather together, as if from the ends of the earth, to mourn, or pretend to mourn, over a person they would not have known by sight, and with whom they have never been on visiting terms, till a black-edged card informed them that he was at home in his coffin. Thus on the fifth night, at the unusual hour of ten, the Baronet was favoured with a huge card announcing the arrival of Mr. Twigg, to sympathize as a branch in the sorrow of the Tyrrels; and accordingly that person soon made his entrance, which, to Sir Mark, was literally "a gentleman's first appearance in the character of the Stranger." After a few bows and compliments he proceeded thus: —

"I hope I know better, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, than to intrude at untimely hours, but as the saying is, necessity has no law. It seems very odd that a man of my property can't have a bed at an inn, but so it is, though I offered the Green Man a guinea for one, and that's sixteen shillings more than ever I paid in my life. It's not very pleasant for a man with money to go a begging for a night's board and lodging; but before your hospitality opens an account with me, let's know, says you, who and what you are."

"To tell the truth," replied the Baronet, "you have really the advantage of me: though I hope you won't take it as any thing personal: but there are so many strange faces in the field, I was never so thrown out in my life. It's very strange, Sir, but though I can call over fifty couple of hounds at sight, and have every one of 'em at the tip of my tongue, and some of them not the easiest to remember, — I say, Sir, it's very strange, but of all the ladies and gentlemen that have been in at the death of my poor brother, I can't give their own names to one half of the pack, upon my soul I can't, dog or bitch."

"Nothing more likely," returned the visiter, "and particularly when there's property in the case, and another name goes along with it. You must know, I got five thousand consols from my old master for changing Tyrrel into Twigg: not a bad bargain, says you, and indeed I'd have taken a whole firm on the same terms; otherwise I have as good a right as any one to have a stag's head on my gold seal, though I've took a bee for my crest in preference, as, barring the five thousand, all my honey and wax through life, as I may say, has been of my own making. But that's neither here nor there, as regards my right to roost on your family tree. I presume, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, you've heard of my grandfather, old Theophilus Tyrrel, that died and left nothing to nobody?"

"To be sure I have," said the Baronet, "he was cleaned out on the turf. I remember I was at his funeral, and so were you, Sir; I thought I had got a view of you somewhere, though I could not hit it off. Let me see — my aunt's mother, and your mother's aunt — but I shall only founder if I attempt to go through the pedigree. Mr. Twigg, you are heartily welcome to Tylney Hall."

"I beg to say I am much obliged, Sir Mark, for all favours; and must solicit a continuation of the same for my horse, and my shay, and my servant. By the by, if you'd like my shay to go with the line of carriages, at the burying, I shall feel happy to oblige: I brought my own man down with me, and new blacked him on purpose. I assure you it's a very spruce sort of set out — bran new only a month ago — yellow picked out with red, and lots of bright brass bees on the harness. A bit of a flourish, says you, for one that has known afore now what drawing a truck is. But where's the harm of that? I've riz like a rocket at Vauxhall by the exertion of my own hands, and have as good a right to leave off with a bit of a flash."

"Mr. Twigg," said the Baronet, "there's no disgrace in a humble set out in life, provided we're well up at the end: in this world, you know, we can't all be equally mounted; one begins his course on a plate horse, may-

be, another on a cock-tail, and another on a galloway; but if by straight riding, and so forth, a man's in a good place at the finish, why it's to his honour and credit, and let him have the brush or the pad, as may be, gentle or simple."

"My own sentiments to a T," exclaimed the delighted Twigg. "We ought never to forget what we sprung from, as I said the very last show to the Lord Mayor, who begun life as a common waiter at a tavern. My Lord Mayor, says I, while all the steeples was a-pealing, them 's bigger bells than used to ring for you at the King's Head. To be sure the Sword-Bearer took me to task, but I gave him his change. I wonder, says I, a man can be so uppish at riding behind six horses, that to my knowledge has been drawn by eight, and that's when he first came up to London in the Bath wagon."

"I believe," said Sir Mark, "you were not intimate with my poor brother Herbert — indeed he was so long abroad, I can hardly say that I was intimate with him myself."

"Never set eyes on him," said Twigg, "but for all that, am anxious to treat his remains with strict assiduity and attention, and indeed any connection in the same line; and that's more than I could say twenty years ago. It was all up hill then, and living from hand to mouth, and even my own three first children, God forgive me, I could not afford to fret for; but now I'm a man of property, I feel for everybody, and was at a neighbour's funeral only last week. He died worth a plum, if he was worth a penny, and kept his carriage. I remember his pole though, before he had a pair of horses to it, and good reason why, for it was nothing but a barber's.

The entrance of supper put an end to these excursions of memory up the stream of time, a stream which Twigg was fond of ascending against the tide, with the wilfulness and velocity of a steamer. With all his seeming lowliness, he had at bottom a deal of the devil's "darling sin," "the pride that apes humility." Out of nothing, it is written, God created the world, and as out of nothing Twigg had created some thirty thousand pounds, he considered himself as a sort of Deity, who had wrought a miracle. In short, he liked to insist on his own littleness originally, in order to enhance his apparent magnitude when viewed afterwards through the solar microscope of success; a flea as it were magnified by thirty thousand into the proportions of an elephant. To do him justice, he had made his way by industry and ingenuity, and was entitled to blazon them if he liked as his supporters, instead of "two salvages proper," or a brace of griffins: but he did not sufficiently consider whether a retired barber might choose to be stirred up by his own pole, or an ex-waiter to have it always rung in his ears, that he had been brought up on Bell's system.

"Very fine lads, upon my word," he remarked, as Ringwood, Raby, and the Creole, took their seats at the supper-table, "and it will be their own faults if they don't shine in life. When I was of your age, young gentlemen," he added, addressing the boys, "I used to run of errands and black shoes, and walked to London with only a shilling in my pocket, to seek my fortune; and now here I am, a man of property, and a common-council man besides. Not a bad example, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, to be set before the rising generation. I often think my own life and rise in the world would make as good a history for young persons as Dick Whittington's, one of the best classical works, by the by, in the English language."

"But it might be better for all that," remarked Ringwood, with a look of appeal towards his father, "I mean as to worrying the rats, for if the Black King gave such heaps of gold for a cat, what wouldn't he have come down for a keen ferret or two, crossed with the pole-cat, and a bull-terrier like Whop, and as good at all vermin by land or water?"

"To be sure," answered the Baronet, "Whop is worth his weight in gold — always goes at the head, and you may chew his foot like tobacco

before he'll let go, whether of a badger or a Christian. I remember the grip he took of Black Will the poacher,"— but before the story could come off, the supper party was suddenly alarmed by a bustle over head, followed by shrieks so shrill and incessant, from the chamber of death, that for a long minute each individual stared at his neighbour as mute and motionless as a stag at gaze. At last, snatching a candle, the baronet rushed up the staircase, followed by the others, Twigg, at every step, as became a man of property, bellowing out, "Thieves! thieves! thieves!"

CHAPTER XI.

"Noe doubt manie livinge persones, both menne and womenne, have seen ye Deville bodilie, beinge like unto one hugeous black gote, with hornis and taile."

KING JAMES I.

On entering the bedchamber, the screaming was found to proceed from the dairy-maid and laundry-woman. Both had thrown their aprons over their heads, and each had backed her chair against the opposite wall, through which she seemed endeavouring to force it by convulsive efforts of her legs and feet, while with desperate energy her hands clung to the mahogany elbows, as if in resistance of human or superhuman abduction.

"Skreek, Peggy, skreek," panted the laundress, her own breath being just exhausted by a sostenuto on D in alt; and accordingly Peggy shrieked with a shrillness and perseverance, that even a stuck pig would have stuck at; and when her voice failed, the other took it up, like the celebrated echo at Killarney, which always outdoes its original.

"In the name of God, wench," said the Baronet, seizing the dairy-maid by the arm, "what game's afoot to raise such a view halloo?" but before she could compose a sentence, fear distributed it all into pie, as a printer would say, by shaking every word and syllable from each other.

"In the name of the devil," cried Twigg, carefully imitating the Baronet's movements, by seizing the arm of the laundress, "what's the meaning of this rumpus?" but the two maidens continued to squall against each other as if for a wager; and when Sir Mark, and then Twigg, successively plucked away an apron, they saw eyes resolutely screwed together, as if they were never again to unclose, and mouths as obstinately wide open as if they were never more to shut.

"Confound your squalling," cried Sir Mark, "it's like hawk and hern, striving which shall go highest — you could not yell more if you'd unkenneled the devil himself."

"Do n't neame his neame," said the terrified Peggy, with a shuddering groan like the low neighing of a horse, "he's been in this very room — only a minute ago, and mayn't be no great ways off this blessed moment."

"I'll take my gospel oath on it," asseverated the laundress, "on my own bended knees — with two horns and a tail — and as soot black as the chimbley back. One thing I 'm sure on," she added sobbing, "he's none o' my raising. God forgive me for sayin so, but I do n't know my prayers well enough to say 'em back'ards. As for sin and wickedness, except looking in on a cousin or so on Sundays, instead of going to church, or may be the vally of a pint of strong ale, or being a little charitable with the torn linen, or on a chance time lending the master's shirts to be dirtied out by the footman -- "

"Or obliging a poor man's pig with a little skim milk," whimpered Peggy, "or a lone widow's hen with a sitting o' eggs — the Lord be near us if we 're to go to the pit for such as that!"

"I 'm sure I don't know why he should come to *hus*," blubbered the laundress, "any more nor the cook and butler."

"A likely story truly," said the baronet, getting impatient, "what the devil should the devil come here for? the brace o' you isn't worth his fetching. He 'd hardly go a bat-fowling for a couple of screech-owls."

"Saving your honour's presence," said Peggy, with a reverential curtsey, "your honour in course knows best. It 's like enough the Wicked One do n't demean himself to come arter the like of us poor sarvants, when there 's a dead gentleman in the room. For sartin he did antic about the coffin very fearsome, and seemed to make much on it — but the Lord be near us," she ejaculated in a loud whisper, "there he is again," — an announcement the laundress took so promptly, that before he was aware she had clutched Twigg by the arm, and was hurrying him down stairs three steps at a time, to the imminent risk of his neck. In fact, following the direction of Peggy's eyes, Sir Mark plainly perceived a black head peeping from behind a bed-curtain, an apparition so totally unexpected, that for some moments, the spectators were all as much confounded as if the Deuce had actually turned up. At last, uttering a word of recognition, the young Creole advanced boldly to the bed, and dragging forward a black footman in a new suit of sables, began to kick and cuff him with a freedom which does not yet belong to this land of liberty. Black or white, Sir Mark could not endure to see a man so buffeted by a stripling, and he began to interfere with some sternness, when the poor Negro himself interceded for the offender, with an excuse more worthy of a Christian than a Heathen.

"Nebber mind," he said, "me berry glad to see him face. When Massa Walter a piccanniny, him bite and scratch Pompey worse dan dat; nebber mind. Him larrup Pompey ebbery day of him life in San Kitts. Gorramity bless him! me 'long to Massa Twigg now Sare, but beforetimes me 'long to Massa Curnel Tyrrell — Gorramity bless him, too. Oh ki!"

It appeared on explanation, that Pompey had formerly been a black unit in the West Indian establishment of the deceased, but after passing through various hands, he had come into the possession of our citizen, through a will and testament by which Fortune had knocked down to him the auction-like lot of five thousand pounds, the surname of Twigg, and a Nigger. The affectionate African having learnt below stairs the pedigree of the corse, and taking advantage of a quiet round game, set on foot in the kitchen by the undertaker's man, had crept stealthily to indulge in a last look, and a last "talkee talkee" with his old master, to the signal discomfiture of his new one.

"It 's very hard," said the latter, as he re-entered the room, "that a man like me can't have a black footman, as well as other people of property, without being deviled down strange stairs by a long-legged washerwoman, into the very kitchen, among common domestic menial servants, coachman, and footman, and what not — not quite the thing for one of the Livery. Pompey, you sir, mind your manners, and do n't stand grinning at Sir Mark Tyrrell, Baronet. Make yourself scarce! I 'm very sorry, I 'm sure, to cause such a kick up in a respectable house, but it 's all through that d——d black man; and, says you, the Green Man too, for not giving me a bed."

"Take it easy," said the Baronet, "and overlook the black — my own jades were in fault to cackle so over a mare's nest. To be sure, if the wenches had sworn to a crowned king in a green hunting coat, with a horn, and so forth, and a broad arrow in the right place, I do n't know if I 'd have gone into the room myself without a little craning — but I 'll tell you that story at our next meet, or there 'll be but a cold scent on the supper table. As it is, our pullets won't be a bit hotter for having been deviled. But the devil has little to do with the like of *him*," he added,

approaching the coffin; and removing the lid, he first patted the marble cheek, and then kissed the brow of the corpse.

"As I may some day be sheriff," said Twigg to himself, as in a dramatic aside, "it 's as well to accustom myself to death wherever I can," and accordingly he placed himself on the opposite side of the coffin, and began to look on its tenant so earnestly, as to persuade the good-natured Baronet that he was one of the most feeling and sympathizing friends he had ever known.

A burst of grief, however, from the Creole at the sight of his parent, interrupted their very different meditations, and considerately replacing the coffin lid, the uncle led his nephew down to the supper table, followed readily by Twigg, whose stomach had come to a proper sense of the emptiness of this life. He did not indeed omit dropping something about poor man's sauce, having been a poor man himself, and he appropriately ate like one who had known what it is to want a meal, washing it down afterwards like a man who had known what it is to want four glasses of brandy and water.

"I am an early bird," he said, towards one o'clock, "and must go to roost. Sir Mark Tyrrell, Baronet, I beg to say good-night, and the same to the young gentlemen, and hope they will sedulously cultivate early habits, as the unvarying means of getting up in the world. For my part, I'm never called, but wake at six, as regular as clock-work — but, says you, a man knows how to rise from his bed that has risen from nothing." So saying, he seized his candlestick, and the party separated for the night.

On the morrow the tomb closed over the remains of Herbert Tyrrell. As the old ballad laconically says, "the knell was rung, and the dirge was sung," and the mourners departed; not a little disappointed at his leaving only some personal property, and many were much scandalized, that even this was bequeathed to a natural son, the offspring of a woman of colour, and most likely, but half a Christian. Twigg, however, protested "that a man of his means need not to go about gaping after godsends and windfalls, and for his own part, he must say, what with a sniff of country air, and a relax from business, and the pleasant prospects, and the good cheer, and a hearty welcome, and above all, the very polite, civil urbanity of Sir Mark Tyrrell, Baronet, he must say, allowing for the melancholy occasion, and the ruck in his back from skurrying down such a noble flight of stairs, it was altogether one of the pleasantest days he had ever spent since he was independent."

CHAPTER XII.

Look here upon this picture, and on this;
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

HAMLET.

——————— Give me leave
To enjoy myself: that place that does contain
My books, the best companions, is to me
A glorious court, where hourly I converse
With the old sages and philosophers.

THE ELDER BROTHER.

TIME, the soother of all sorrows, was not slow in healing the wound inflicted on the Baronet, by his brother's death. By degrees he resumed the sports of the field, and especially the chase, into which Ringwood entered with such zeal, that not contented with doing as his father did before him,

he sometimes contrived to leave the old gentleman behind him, to the infinite delight of Dick the huntsman, to whom, as Filch says, "he was indebted for his edication. The irreverend Dick Doughty, indeed, took far more pleasure in his pupil than fell to the lot of the Reverend Dr. Burdock, who had undertaken to prepare the young gentleman for the University. The reason might be that in Dick's equestrian school, Ringwood always did his own exercise, whereas in the doctor's classical academy, it was too often done for him by others. Dick reported his scholar as d — d fast, and one as would go at anything." The Doctor that he was "deplorably slow, and did not take to any one branch of learning." The huntsman swore that he had "the best seat on a horse, and the lightest hand, in the whole country: and he looked on the next hunter's plate as good as booked to him." The pedagogue lamented to say, he had "the worst head for the classics and mathematics he ever knew, and indeed he should not be very much surprised if he got plucked at College." Even the partial parent confessed at times, that Ringwood deserved "to be well horsed for learning so little," at the same time taking liberal care to horse himwell, on thoroughbred ones, because he hunted so much. This censure, however, never escaped Sir Mark, but when he was a little splenetic, under a fit of the gout. Indeed, on one occasion, when the sporting Vicar, Dr. Cobb, thought proper to sound the depths of the young 'Squire's Latin, as they waited the find together by the cover side, the Baronet took it in some dudgeon: though he said nothing, till in running, Ringwood cleared a stiff fence, which no one else would take, whereupon Sir Mark pulled his horse alongside the hack of the Doctor, shouting out, with all the ecstasy of a fox-hunter, "There, Parson; damme, could Cicero do that!!"

The Creole, also, or St. Kitts, as he was familiarly nicknamed by Sir Mark, from the place of his birth, continued likewise to grow in favour with his uncle, through the skill he displayed in hunting, fowling, and fishing; but with a deep chagrin, amounting at times to bitterness, the Baronet observed the decided aversion of Raby to all such pursuits. At the age of sixteen, he could neither clear a hurdle, bring down his bird, nor throw a fly for a trout; in short, he was awfully backward in his sporting. Thanks to the reducing system of Dr. Bellamy, who always found in "the lowest depths, a lower still," he had undergone in his boyhood a long and languishing illness, which had rendered him incapable of bodily exertion: being thus thrown on his own resources for amusement, he had taken eagerly to reading, and an extensive old family library supplied this appetite with plenty as well as variety of food. His especial favourites, however, were the old English dramatists and poets, whose most golden passages he got by heart, or rather by soul. Absorbed in such studies, in which neither his father nor his brother could sympathize, he became a sort of domestic anchorite, worshipping his own idols in secret, with the more fervour, because of the persecution he endured on their account. At last, through the good nursing of Mistress Deborah, who wisely thought and said, "that a growing young — gentleman could'nt get fat — on physic and a fig — for Dr. Bellamy" — Raby recovered his strength and flesh; but he neglected the stable and dog-kennel as much as ever. His passion for letters had now overgrown and choked his taste for the chase, if he ever had any, and probably he felt it too late to begin to ground himself in the mere A B C of those rural arts and sciences in which his own contemporaries were already proficients. "Ignorance is bliss," where knowledge is only to be obtained by the scholar's going, looby-like, to a school for adults. Besides, sickness and personal suffering had subdued his nature into unusual gentleness, and with a tone of feeling of extreme tenderness, indeed an almost overwrought sensibility, he had become sensitively abhorrent of man's inflictions on the lower animals, holding us strictly bound, according to the poet, —

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

"For my part," said Sir Mark, "I can't think where the boy got it—his dear mother, God rest her soul! was the best horse-woman in Christendom: — many a time the knife's been offered to her to take say. But tell Raby of a stag of ten tines, and he 'll open about Shakspeare, and the big round tears running down his innocent nose, as if it wasn't the natur of the beast to cry like a human creature. Not that I would'nt as soon as any one cry hark to humanity, only it's just not the time for it, when Tiger and Terrible are hanging at his throat. Pity's all very well, provided it's the genuine milk of human kindness, but it's often too like the London-made stuff, nothing but chalk and water. Why zounds, boy, if you were even training for the church, there'd be no harm in your having a gallop with the hounds; I remember the time Dr. Cobb never missed a meet of the hunt, and he often comes now to see them find, though he's grown too fat and corpulent to enjoy a burst."

To such remarks from his father, Raby made little or no reply; but when Ringwood ventured a sneer at what he called the milksop amusements of his brother, the latter always retorted with much spirit and point on certain deficiencies, which would have subjected the young Nimrod to the old birch rod of Dr. Busby. These little differences between the brothers might generally be regarded as merely boxing with the muffles on; but as even this kind of sparring is attended with some danger to the temper, it occasionally ended in a quarrel in earnest. This result was always aggravated by the injudicious interference of the Creole, which only served to protract a battle into a campaign, as a duel between two game-cocks is sometimes prolonged by the untimely interposition of a third.

For example, — Gingerpile is down on the broad of his back, with his head awry, and looking like trussing. He gapes wider than a young blackbird before breakfast, and his bloody comb resembles a bit of underdone steak, when the cook says "it's only the gravy." Red stands staggering and swaggering over him, mustering all the breath in his crop for a crow, but the crop has had a spur through it, yet that he is the victor he knows, and looks knowingly with only one eye on the vanquished. All the Poultry to Chick Lane is the odds on him, when suddenly Blackhackle unfairly strikes in, on his blind side, and with a flirt, giving Red a fair back fall, enables Gingerpile to get second wind, and flare up again like a phœnix. Accordingly he scrambles on his legs, and after a little game of see-saw between his head and tail, he accomplishes a roupy chuckle, which, unlike cockcrows in general, seems to recall the ghost of Red, who rises and walks. At it they go again: but after exchanging a bushel of pecks, at last faintly billing like pigeons, they feebly lay their necks by turns over each other, as if hate had degenerated into love. Gingerpile is now, however the freshest, and makes a rush at Red, who ducks his head to avoid punishment, and attempts to walk away between the other's legs, when he gets such a spur right and left, that he is fain to tuck his legs under him, and lay his breast to the earth, as if brooding a batch of chickens. He is evidently done out of the championship, or at least he would be done out of it, but for the abominable Blackhackle, who, like the king-making Earl of Warwick, takes fresh offence at the sovereignty of Gingerpile. With a dig somewhere near the root of the tail feathers, he sends him to wriggle about the yard till Red is ready for another round; and in this manner the contest is da-capo'd from hour to hour, and from day to day, to the perpetual disquiet of the yard.

Even thus did the Creole revive a drooping argument by some unseasonable fling at its antagonist, which he was well enabled to do by the diver-

sity of his own taste, for he frequented the covers which lodged authors, as well as those that harboured foxes. According by these discussions, by the help of Jack-of-both-sides, generally ended as drawn games, which were to be renewed between the parties at the first opportunity. It was impossible, however, that such subjects of dispute should remain in abeyance so long, without engendering some degree of asperity, so that sharp words and sudden heat sometimes arose on questions which had but a remote reference, if any, to literature or sporting.

Possibly the Creole, who did not agree over well with either of his cousins, was not displeased secretly to see them differ a little with each other, especially as it helped to avenge a personal grudge which he entertained against both. Boys, in the reckless levity of their mirth, have a proneness to satire, which is apt to select personal defects or peculiarities as butts for raillery and ridicule. Prompted by this spirit, Ringwood and Raby, in common with their schoolfellows, had set their wits against the Creole, or rather his complexion, a subject on which he was as sensitive, as if he had been without a skin. A pitched battle with each of the "pale faces" was the consequence, wherein, to adopt the language of coursing, Creole beat Raby, and Ringwood beat Creole; Ringwood thereby establishing his right to use the obnoxious nickname of Gip, (the short for Gipsy,) which had given rise to the contest. It must be remembered, that St. Kitts descended by his mother's side at least from those "souls of fire and children of the sun, with whom revenge is virtue." It is highly probable, therefore, that his defeat and the offence of the provoking soubriquet rankled in his mind long after its origin; but he buried it, like Zanga, in his "heart of hearts," for his outward bearing to his cousins was frank and open, and accompanied with much profession and actual appearance of affection. Nevertheless, it never amounted to that absolute cordiality which obtains between natures thoroughly congenial. There is a mysterious instinct within us, which unerringly guides the soul in its selection of a true friend, and neither with Ringwood, nor with Raby, did this secret impulse point towards the West Indian, as one to be "grappled to the heart with hooks of steel."

"I would thank you, Ringwood," said the Creole one day to his elder cousin, who had just been Gip-ping him, "I would thank you, Ringwood, to remember that I have a Christian name and a surname, as well as yourself. I have put up hitherto, with the contemptuous syllable you have been pleased to call me by, as a boyish impertinence; but now that we are on the eve of going to college together, I must inform you that I shall look for a more suitable mode of address. I shall certainly consider myself entitled to be called Walter, or at least any legitimate abbreviation of that name you may choose to adopt."

"I have never disputed the *legitimacy* of your Walter, or your Tyrrel either, with or without abbreviations," retorted Ringwood, whose temper was a little turned, by his having been thrown out in hunting. "And as we are going to college, where of course you will give me the go by, I intended to drop Gip of my own accord, as it might not come well, hereafter, from plain Ringwood Tyrrel to an LL.D."

"If your emphasis on legitimate," returned the Creole hastily, "implies any unworthy allusion to my birth, I will only remind you, that the imputation touches your uncle, as well as my father, and leave your heart to its own reproach."

"I meant no offence, St. Kitts," said the really good-hearted Ringwood, "and am sorry if you've been wrung — come, shake hands, and burn the stud-book! As it touches you on the raw, if I call you Gip again, I give you leave to call me Flincher in the face of the whole field."

The Creole took the hand that was proffered, or rather he suffered his own to be taken by it, for as the grammatical Dr. Burdock would have ob-

served, to shake hands was with one a verb active, and with the other a verb passive. And thus ended a quarrel, that Ringwood instantly forgot, but the sting of which his cousin preserved, and hermetically sealed up like a serpent in spirits.

The month following this skirmish, the trio departed for Oxford, a change of much indifference to the Creole, of considerable gratification to Raby, and prodigious vexation to Ringwood; when he discovered that the rules and regulations of Alma Mater were very much the same in spirit with the notice so commonly set forth at the gates o' the public gardens round the Metropolis: namely—

"NO DOGS OR PATTENS ADMITTED."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Since I mounted on the towers of pride and ambition, my soul has been invaded by a thousand miseries, and a thousand toils, and four thousand disquiets."

SANCHO PANZA.

BEFORE the young Collegians had been gone a week, Sir Mark began to feel very dull and lonely, especially as his gout had set in again with a rigour which threatened to outlast the remainder of the hunting season. Laid up in an easy chair, with his two supporters couchant instead of rampant, he had many long hours for reflection; even his friends who wore the button of the hunt, being a little apt to neglect him, when he was incapable of a run, regarding him in much the same light as a fox who had been lamed in a gin. In this dilemma, his thoughts naturally looked forward to the period when age and infirmity might withdraw him permanently from the field, and he began to calculate on his future situation with all its contingencies.

"In the course of nature," he soliloquized, "the short breath of poor broken-winded old Deborah won't last out many winters, though she has been taken up from hard work, but age won't be denied. She has been a good one in her day, and I shall have a heavy miss of her when it comes to a mort — for let alone her capital tooling of the whole team of servants, she's the only hedge I have against Dr. Bellamy, who's too fond of shortening my feeds, and taking me off hard meat to put me upon mashes. God knows what I shall do when I come to be gouty for good, or may be bedridden and dead-foundered towards the finish. It wouldn't be a bad cast to scribble a line or two to sister Kate, and get her to run a trail to Tylney Hall, to take the lead of the house like, and be the whipper-in to the maids. Besides, the boys by and by will be leaving college, and will want to be pairing for life, and to be looking out among the young misses, but the devil a young lady will come to the Hall, now there's no females to visit. Kate is a gentlewoman, and well bred, though I've known even a raw-boned cribbiting old jade of an aunt with a devilish pain in her temper, a good deal backed by young girls, provided there were some handsome blood-like looking colts of nephews in the same stable. By the by, I wonder that Grace Rivers never shows now at the Hall, where she was always first favourite. D—n the Paragon filly for dying, for I meant to have named her after Grace. Egad, I should like to see Ringwood riding a steeple chase to Tylney church, and her little white hand to go to the winner. The old Justice's lands join ours, and it would be a pretty property to include through a marriage in a ringfence."

In conformity with these politic calculations, in which he considered he had made up anything but a bad book, the Baronet immediately rang for

pen and ink, and concocted a letter to his sister in the north, who had married a Scotch laird, and was recently become a widow; and what was still better in his estimation, a widow without either colt or filly to run whinnying after her heels. The epistle, after a page of awkward, but honest condolence, conveyed a pressing invitation to the relict to spend the remainder of her days at Tylney Hall, and it concluded by requesting an immediate answer, hoping "she would not sit in the saddle craning over the Border, but charge it at once, and return at her best pace to the seat of her ancestors."

In the mean time the Baronet was not displeased to learn from Dr. Bellamy, that a family had just come to settle in the vicinity, whose visits promised to dissipate his ennui, as they declared themselves to be distant relatives of the Tyrrels.

"I have been honoured with the compliment," said the Doctor, "of being called in to the whole family the very day after their arrival. As they had removed from the metropolis to the country, by way of precaution against the sudden change of air, I had the gratification of prescribing an alterative for them all around. Mr. Twigg, indeed, did me the favour to object to taking anything I recommended, saying, that a man who had met with his changes in life needn't care for changes of air; but I had the pleasure of persuading him to a pill over night, and a draught in the morning. If I recollect right, I had the happiness of riding in the same mourning coach with him at the interment of the lamented Colonel Tyrrel; and really found the gentleman very agreeable and pleasant."

In fact, Twigg, at the burial in question, had become so enamoured of a country life, that he made up his mind to retire some day from civic dignity into "rural felicity,"

"With a cow, and a pig, and a barn door and all."

A plan he now put in execution by purchasing, as advertised, "a large roomy family house, with an extensive walled garden well stocked, and about fifty acres of land, arable and pasture." Since his last visit to the country, he had almost doubled his capital, and had served the office of Sheriff of London; but as that city seemed in no hurry to make him its Lord Mayor, he determined to withdraw like Cincinnatus to a Sabine farm. In choosing the locality of this pastoral retreat, he was guided by three suggestions; which, like the witches in Macbeth, severally addressed themselves to his ambition. The first saluting him as Timothy Twigg, Esquire, hinted that a friendly intercourse with the Baronet would be the means of introducing him to the best society in the country — no slight advantage to a man who, in any other shire, would have been "alike unknowing and unknown." The second hailing him as Mr. Sheriff Twigg, reminded him that there were such things as sheriffs of counties; and that there was no earthly reason why one office shouldn't lead to the other. And the third dubbing him at once, whispered that the daughter of Sir Timothy Twigg, Knight, and the son of Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, would be as twelvepence to a shilling with regard to rank.

With these views the prosperous citizen purchased the desirable mansion called Hollington House, a name he thought proper to alter to The Hive. In the same spirit he removed the two eagles volant that flanked the great gates, and substituted a pair of stone bee-hives, at the same time favouring the sun-dial in the fore court with a motto from Dr. Watts, concerning the little busy insect he had chosen for his crest. A Latin inscription on an ornamental obelisk in the garden was replaced by a maxim from Poor Richard's Almanack, and the octagon summer-house was labelled with eight out of the twelve Golden Rules. Indeed he indulged in this whim

so profusely that the parish wags took the hint, and again stood godfathers for the house, to which they gave the appropriate name of "the House of Industry."

This alias somewhat tried the temper of Mr. Twigg, who thought it very hard that a man of his property could not give what name he chose to his own house, as well as to his own child; but his prospect of "rural felicity" began already to be obscured by clouds from other quarters. An ironmonger does not necessarily acquire a knowledge of agriculture, because ploughshares, spades, and sickles are amongst his items of commerce; and when our retired hardwareman turned gentleman-farmer, he found to his infinite annoyance that it required a previous apprenticeship as much as any other business. Ignorance and obstinacy however are as closely united as the Siamese Twins, and even in farming, Mr. Twigg chose to go his own road, which, as he walked in the dark, was pretty sure to be the wrong one. He had been used to activity, he said, all his life, and could not sit down with his hands before him and look on. He consequently interfered so pertinaciously in every rural or domestic act, as to realize the countryman's description of Garrick, "a little brisk man, as busy as a bee, and on the stage the whole time."

He had notified to the Baronet, through Dr. Bellamy, that "as gout prevented the honour of a call at the Hive, he intended to waive ceremony and drop in himself at the Hall, to receive congratulations and cetera on coming to his landed estate." Day passed after day, however, without bringing the promised visiter, till at last one fine morning Sir Mark dissolved the Doctor's injunction against horse exercise, and mounting his sorrel hack, rode leisurely over to Hollington — "to see," as he said, "whether the whole swarm had not suffocated themselves in housewarming the Hive."

"Egad," ejaculated Sir Mark, as he looked up at the emblems which superseded the old eagles, "his bees are no drones. It's well old Sir Theodore Bowles has got the dust in his eyes, or a sight like this would raise his hackle. As I live, too, there's Pompey the Great, in sky blue and orange, coming to open the gate. Well, Beelzebub, is your master at kennel, or on the pad, hey?"

"Maybe iss, maybe no, Sar," answered Pompey, with a low bow. "Walk dis way, Sar," he continued to the Baronet, who for lack of attendance was fain to cast his horse's bridle over the gnomon of the sundial; "walk dis way, Sar," ushering the visiter towards the drawing-room, and half-opening the door, but which he suddenly slammed to again at a signal from a lady within, of whom Sir Mark got a glimpse sufficient to show that she was busy with several new hats and some yards of gold lace.

"Sar, walk dis way," repeated Pompey, turning sharp off to the left, "and pray sit down in de billard-room," at the same time throwing the door wide open; but the Baronet again retreated of his own accord, on beholding a young lady partly "uncased," as he would have called it, who, in company with her dressmaker, was too busily engaged over a series of silk dresses which covered the billiard table, to notice the intrusion.

"Beg pardon, Sar, walk *dis* way," reiterated the discomfited Pompey, wheeling off to the right, "nobody is in de parlour;" but the door of this Bluebeard chamber was locked on the inside, and whatever mysterious personage was in the room, he or she had evidently some private reason for remaining incog.

In this dilemma poor Pompey left the Baronet standing in the middle of the hall, while he popped his puzzled head in at the door of the library to ask massa if he was at home, the only answer to which was an audible imprecation on his black face, and a command to show every one into the drawing-room.

"Please, massa, dere is no room at home but de kitchen," whispered Pompey, cautiously reducing the aperture of the door to a crack, "and it's Massa Baronet Tyrrel:" an announcement which operated so electrically on the master of the house that it drew him from his den, like a badger. In fact, he rushed out in his shirt sleeves and an apron, and leading Sir Mark with a warm welcome into the library, offered him the only chair that was vacant, in the mean time apologizing profusely for the state of the sanctorum and his own appearance.

"It's very ridiculous for a man of my property to be found in this pickle, but everybody is obliged now and then to be not at home, though, says you, I ought to be quite at home among so much hardware. To be sure watering pots, and steel-traps, and spades, and scythes, and other ironworks is n't quite the works for a book-room; but I objected to take the old watering pots and cetera at the valuation, and good reason why, I could have them bran new for the money from my warehouse, and to-day they 've come down by the wagon, and I was just checking them by the invoice."

"My good Sir," replied the Baronet, "it's no fault of your's if I 've walked you up in moulting time, and you are not in full feather. I 've been amiss and dead lame with the gout, or I should have been over before to bid you welcome to Hollington. I sincerely hope you find your new house to your liking, and the air agreeable to your constitution."

"Candour compels to say," answered Twigg, his brow suddenly overcasting as he spoke, "I 'm afraid it do n't. Between you and me, I find retirement very hard work, and have hardly had time to eat, drink, or sleep, since I left off business. I never felt so low in my life, and I 've been as low in life as most people. But I must n't forget my manners now I 'm a gentleman: it 's time, says you, to go into the drawing-room and be introduced to Mrs. T.; I'll be bound she 's waiting for us with the cake and wine." So saying he led the way to the drawing-room, where they found Mrs. Twigg playing the lady at a short notice. After the usual ceremonies of presentation, the father inquired for Miss Twigg, to which the mother replied, "that she was in the library, studying and improving her mind with the fashionable novels."

"It's a lie, Madam," exclaimed Twigg, who was really a domestic Dionysius, "I 've just come from the library myself."

"It 's really a pity, Mr. T.," replied the wife, taking the epithet as calmly as if she was used to it, "that you let your temper be ruffled so by them servants. I hope there 's no harm in not knowing exactly where Miss Twigg is, considering up to this very minute I 've been engaged in the garden — showing the gardener where he 's to sow the rose-bushes, and plant the mignionnette."

"Then Pompey 's a liar any how, for he told me you were in the drawing-room, gold-banding the servants' hats." And with this which he called a clencher, Twigg turned to the Baronet, saying, "You see I mean to be the king bee of my own hive."

"I hope, Madam, you like your new mansion, and the neighbourhood," said Sir Mark, addressing the lady of the house, by way of putting a change upon the conversation; "it 's as pretty a country as one would wish to cross, never deep in winter, and the fences not stiffer than common."

"I have no doubt, Sir," answered Mrs. Twigg, "I shall find it just what you say, provided I 'm able to leave the house, but at present if I was to turn my back it would be all high life below stairs. Twelve in the kitchen is an evening party of themselves, but they can 't be content. This very morning I heard the groom talking to the coachman about giving a ball."

"I have no doubt you did, Madam," replied the Baronet, looking very

significantly at Twigg, to whom he remarked in a whisper, "She's running riot after a country dance, and a dose of bitter-aloes."

"Make yourself easy, Mrs. T., about the groom," said Twigg, "for he'll groom no more here: I warned him off the premises an hour ago for deceiving me about the gray mare. The more fool, says you, to take his judgment, for of course he had a feeling out of the bargain, but a man that has ridden for fifty years upon shank's naggy can't be expected to know much about horses. But it don't do, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, for a man of my property to show ignorance, so says I, Thomas, between you and me and the post is this mare a good horse? Sir, says Thomas, take my word on her, she's no action behind, none whatever; and accordingly I bought her and paid for her down on the nail; but instead of being a quiet one as he said, the very first time she was gigged she kicked the what-d'ye-call-it all into splinters."

"Not used to single harness, may be," remarked the Baronet, "or only half broke. But how goes on the garden — it used to be well looked after by old Grub?"

"Old Grub has got warning too, Sir Mark," replied the lady, "and I'm sorry to say arn't working out his month as if he cared about a character. By the desire of Mr. T. he was to sow six sacks of potatoes, and out of sheer spite, he has sliced 'em all up into slivers, as if they were going to be baked under a joint of meat."

"Damn the potatoes," said Twigg, getting warm, "that's only a flea bite: but it is hard, Sir Mark, that a man like me can't walk over my own fields, to look at my own prospects, without having my head threatened into holes. Only last Monday, I was called to, if I didn't make myself scarce, my brains would be let out for a holyday, by a ruffian-looking fellow that was driving pegs into the ground, with pieces of wire tied to the top."

"Necklaces for poor Puss," said the Baronet, with a significant wink to Twigg, which Twigg took like a man who heard, for the first time, of cats wearing such ornaments.

"But of course, Madam," continued Sir Mark, "you derive great satisfaction from your dairy. I've observed there's nothing my own town friends settle down to so kindly, as the home-made butter!"

"It a'nt eatable," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, her eyes filling with tears, "and we have to buy from the village. I'm sure it's no fault of ours, for we keep four cows."

"As for eggs," chimed in Mr. Twigg, "if I wanted one for breakfast, I might as well look for 'em in a mare's nest. We've got thirty hens, but it's all talking and no doing; they all go cackling about the stable-yard, instead of laying. — Talking of the stable-yard, Sir Mark, how much victuals ought one to give a coach-horse for a meal?"

"Half a peck of oats mixed with chaff, morning, noon, and night, and as much hay as they'll eat," said the Baronet, "with maybe a handful of beans according to their work."

"I said so, Mrs. T." exclaimed Twigg, with almost a shout, "the animals are over-indulged. "My horses, Sir Mark, every day they sit down to eat, have a truss of hay a-piece, two pecks of oats, and beans by the bushel, for I've calculated their bills of fares."

"Egad then," said Sir Mark, "if they've any blood in 'em they'll want good handling, and curbing up tight, for of course they're ready to jump out of their harness."

"Not a bit of it," said Twigg, "they're as gentle as Jarvies, and go as slow as if they were taking a fair off the stones a little before sun-set."

"And they had need to be dossil," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, "with such an unsober coachman. The only ride I've had, I got out and walked. It's

a thousand pities too, for he 's a rosy fresh-coloured man, and looks well in the sky blue and orange."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Miss Twigg, who, in answer to the parental inquiries, replied, that she had been an airing in the new carriage. She was a fine showy looking girl of seventeen, with dark active eyes, which kept a good look out, though not on the preventive service; a nose handsome, but prominent, and a good set of teeth, which she was as fond of showing as a wiry Scotch terrier. Even at so early an hour as noon she appeared to be dressed for dinner, and to tell the truth, a little overdone. She was evidently her father's idol, and his eyes beamed with triumph, as he presented her as his only daughter to "Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," whom she favoured with one of those curtseys, which, to adopt a common oratorical figure, are "backward in coming forward."

"I have been telling the Baronet, my love," said Mrs. Twigg, "how beset we are with our servants. Perhaps, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, if an old resident, you can inform if it's true, that this very house has been so repeatedly robbed and broke into as is said. For my own part, I have never been quite easy, since observing that the house-dog objects to bark at any one but the family."

"If my memory can hold its own," said Sir Mark, "there were two or three little attempts at burglary, but they never got beyond a hole in the shutter. Old Sir Theodore was game to the backbone, and a dead shot, and would as soon have peppered a house-breaker as a self-hunting cur."

"There's no comfort in that," remarked the young lady, looking gravely towards her mamma, "for papa never could let off any thing in his life — not that even blunderbusses would be of use in such frights as ours. What with the screech-owl, and the wind toiling the dinner-bell, and the pigeons coming flapping down the chimney, and the horrid rats behind the old wainscot, I never spent such terrifying nights since I read the Romance of the Haunted House."

"To tell the truth," said Twigg to the Baronet, in a confidential tone, "the Hive does n't make much honey at present, and I 'm afraid I 've come down rather too much for the good-will — but halloo," he shouted, as he ran to the window, "that damned blackamoor has tied the horse to the sun-dial, and he has pulled its nose off!"

In fact the sorrel was grazing about the forecourt with Time's index hanging to his bridle; a sort of hint, as it seemed, to his master, who accordingly took his leave; and as he trotted home, he could not help mentally remarking, that to judge from the number of faults and checks, the Twiggs were hunting after happiness with an infernal cold scent.

CHAPTER XIV.

Isab. Yet show some pity.
Ang. I show it most of all, when I show justice;
For then I pity those I do not know,
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall;
And do him right, that, answering one foul wrong,
Lives not to act another.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

Oh, she is
Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed;
And he 's composed of harshness.

TEMPEST.

THE Baronet had accomplished about half the distance homeward, when at the turn of a lane he caught sight of a gentleman, who was walking in the same direction, with a young lady leaning upon his arm. He immediately gave a joyous view holla, and urged his sorrel into a gallop, which quickly brought him alongside of the pedestrians, whom he had recognised afar off, as his old friend and neighbour Mr. Rivers, and his first favourite Miss Grace. As the stern magistrate and his daughter turned their heads at once towards the rider, they presented a striking impersonation of Justice tempered with Mercy; the pale face of the father wearing its usual expression of austerity, with features as frigid as a December day, when frost has stereotyped even the fluids into rigid forms and wrinkles; while the cheerful countenance of the daughter laughed all over, redolent of health, youth, and joy, as a May morning.

Never did the sunlight fall on two so different, yet so akin. Law had indeed inscribed her terrors on the person of her minister — he had a high square forehead, straight black eyebrows, and two dark steadfast eagle-looking eyes, that evidently would not wink at anything. His nose was Roman, which, like a buttress, served to support his face in its massive dignity; and his mouth was rather wide, with two almost invisible thin lips, which were always pale from habitual compression. In complexion and texture his skin resembled parchment, and seemed equally devoid of life and feeling. Draco indeed, when he wrote his laws in blood, must have derived his fluid from the veins of some such stern worshipper of Themis, seeing that it was an ink nothing akin to those which are called sympathetic. No impulse of human passion, love, hate, anger, or grief, ever altered the hue which dwelt on the obdurate visage of the magistrate, whom a romantic fancy might have taken for the Cadi of that oriental city in the Arabian Nights whose inhabitants were all turned into marble.

In figure he was very thin, very tall, and very erect, so that with his forbidding countenance at top, he might be aptly compared to a "take notice" board, promising prosecution and persecution according to law to all trespassers on the wide domains of the statues at large. On the Bench indeed he held himself so stiffly upright in person, and so staunchly inflexible in feeling, that, as a waggish London attorney once remarked, "he seemed actually to have swallowed the sword of Justice."

By the side of this portentous personage stood the fairy-like Grace, the sunshine transmuting her auburn locks into gold, and glistening in her gentle eyes, deeply blue and liquid, as violets bathed in dew. But rocks have their flowers, and deserts their fountains: and from the hard arid nature of the parent sprang a beautiful plant, so instinct with a gushing sympathy for human sorrow, as to resemble that weeping tree which refreshes the parched

inhabitants of earth with the moisture it has collected from heaven. Too seldom was she allowed to intercede between justice and its victims; but when she did, she was like the angel in Sterne, who dropped a tear on the indictment, and blotted it out for ever. As the sole child of a widower, her voice had a charm, like the music of Orpheus, to soften the rock and bend the rugged oak of her parent's nature, who now and then relented, like Pluto, and allowed a poor soul who had fallen into his Tartarus, to revisit the light and air. Many blessings were consequently showered on the beautiful head of Grace Rivers; and in particular, the fervent petition of a grateful Irishman who had been reprieved through her influence, became quite a popular form of prayer. "Oh the darlint of the world. A joyful long life to her, and many of 'em. And plaze God to send his Honour another lady, and a dozen more only daughters!"

"Zounds! neighbour, you 've been a shy cock lately," said Sir Mark, dismounting and passing his arm through the bridle; "time was you used to make the Hall your home, but a badger could n't have given it up more thoroughly if a fox had laid his billet at the door. I almost began to think it who-oop to our old friendship. I 've a crow to pick with Grace too — I do n't know whether I ought n't to pluck a whole rookery, squabbs and all."

"I should feel your reproach, Sir Mark, as a capital indictment," returned the Justice, "if my conscience could find it a true bill. But private pleasure must defer to the public service."

"And my pleasure to my father's," added Grace, at the same time offering her little hand to the Baronet, who clasped it in "his broad bronzed hand," with an affection which showed that the crow he had talked of picking was in reality a dove.

"We have had a very heavy sessions," said the Justice, resuming his apology. "Of course you have heard of the murder at Hazel Bridge, and as a zealous magistrate, my time and humble talents have been arduously employed, — I need only say, I have had eighteen taken up on suspicion, and remanded twelve."

"I really believe," said Grace, "those dreadful murderers will be the death of my poor father; he scarcely eats, drinks, or sleeps, till he brings them to justice; and considering the misery and terror of the mothers, and wives, and sisters, and children, of those he is obliged to suspect and apprehend, I can conceive nothing more harrowing to the feelings."

"Feeling," said the magistrate, "is out of the question; the course of justice is like that of the sacred car of Juggernaut, which may not deviate from its appointed path to spare the voluntary sufferings of those who may choose to throw themselves under its wheels."

"It 's a mercy, then, your car don't drive much near London," said the Baronet, laughing, "or it would soon have more deodands than spokes on its wheels. As for the boys, they try how leisurely they can cross before your horse's nose, and by Jove, they time your pace to a second. Then there are the spavined and wind-galled old women, that can't make up their minds to cross, till you 're close on their haunches. And the gossiping old men that pull up in the middle of the road, to observe the changes in the neighbourhood; to say nothing of the tipsy ones, that try to win a race with you by crossing and jostling; or the Sunday evening folks, when the infantry will walk in the horse-road, and the cavalry must n't ride on the footpath. If you were to drive your car there as you say, without swerving or holding hard, you must n't have a footman behind, but a coroner in livery."

"I see no reason to revise my judgment," replied the magistrate, "even in the cases you have so facetiously adduced. There is little difference between the highwayman who takes your money, and the footpads you mention, who delay you on the road, and rob you of your time by the same process of putting you in bodily fear, either for their persons or your own. The

penalty, whether inflicted by a pistol-bullet in the first case, or by a horse's hoof in the second, is justly incurred by the sufferer's own act and deed, and he must abide the issue. So, as I said before, the course of law—"

"Must be sharp coursing indeed," said Sir Mark, "when your worship is the tryer. A stout hare with a fair start may get away from the best of the long dogs; but the more law you give, the worse chance of saving one's flix."

"He is not so severe as he pretends," said Grace, earnestly addressing the Baronet; "indeed he is not. To hear him talk, you would take him for a Judge Jefferies. But he always does justice to every one but himself."

"I am sorry, Grace," said the magistrate in a severe tone, "that a child of mine should indulge in such a speech without perceiving that it involves a serious censure on her parent. I never *pretend* to discharge my duty by threatening when I ought to punish. Ill indeed would it become me by undue lenity to impeach the mildness of those laws which have been framed by the equity, the wisdom, and the humanity, of the three estates of the realm. As such, I am imperiously bound to dispense their pains and penalties according to the letter, without stint or extenuation, fear or favour. And I trust I may be forgiven for saying that I have invariably dealt the same impartial measure to all—high or low, rich or poor."

"Why truly," said Sir Mark, considerately stepping in to the rescue of poor Grace, who looked distressed at her father's rebuke, "I should be very sorry to fall into your worshipful hands with no better defence than my Baronet's patent."

"Sir Mark, I am deeply obliged by so flattering an opinion," said the Justice, with a grave bow and a grim smile, "which I hope I shall continue to deserve while I have the honour to remain in the commission. Alike unshaken by popular clamour or private prejudice, the terrors—the wholesome terrors—of the law shall never be frittered away in my hands by mistaken mitigations. Mercy to the individual is cruelty to society."

"And mercy to society is cruelty to the individual," said Sir Mark gayly, "when it deprives a gouty prisoner of the usual visits of an old friend and a young favourite. You are sadly missed, Grace, at the Hall; old Deborah has no one to ask after her asthma, old Ralph the gardener has nobody to gossip with him about his flowers, and Ralph's old master has nobody to sing songs to him like a May nightingale."

"I have neither forgotten the Hall nor its kind inhabitants," replied Grace, "though I may have seemed a little remiss. I ought indeed to have inquired before after my young friends. The bold Ringwood, who used to furnish me with birds for my aviary; and the studious Raby, who culled and copied out for me the prettiest poems; and last, not least, your Sinbad of a nephew, who entertained me with endless stories of sharks and fire-flies, and Maroons and rock-snakes, and alligators, and the beautiful Quadroons."

"They are running riot, Grace, I suspect, like other young collegians," said Sir Mark, "getting learning into their heads by day, and wine into their heads by night; sowing wild oats and so-forth, with an in-go now and then at the old battle-royal of Town and Gown."

"The more disgrace to the proctors," remarked the magistrate, "who are invested with the power of repressing such disorders. What signifies it that the University has statutes of her own, if they be not enforced? Expulsion and rustication become nominal punishments, mere nursery bugbears, and Alma Mater herself appears like a silly indulgent mother, who spoils her children by sparing the rod. For my own part, if I were a proctor—"

"You'd make a rare whipper-in no doubt," said the Baronet laughing, "and Madcap, and Folly, and Frolic, and Thoughtless, and the rest of the puppies, would often run yelping along with their sterns between their gaskins. But we are come to the cross-roads, and yonder is the old finger

post, pointing with one hand towards Tylney, and with the other to Hawksley, like a great staring hawbuck giving one news of the fox. As a master of hounds, the field ought to follow my lead, which is towards the Hall and the venison-pasty and other oddments that have been prepared for dinner. Such old friends as Mr. and Miss Rivers will not stand on ceremony, and object to try my covers, without the meet being advertised a fortnight beforehand."

"We should have much pleasure in accepting the invitation," returned the magistrate, adopting the royal pronoun in behalf of Grace and himself, "but till we have appeased the cravings of justice in this bloody business at Hazel Bridge, we have no other appetite, and we must decline with great regret the hospitality of the Hall. There are twelve men still to re-examine, and we have issued warrants against seven more."

"Well, God send them a good deliverance," said Sir Mark, "which I believe is a legal prayer, and so I wish your worship good day. As for you, Grace," he continued, laying his hand on her shoulder with the fondness of a father, "you're like a bait hung over the Tenth Commandment, to trap me into coveting what belongs to my neighbour. I forgot to tell you I have a sister coming home to the Hall, who will love you as much as I do, as sure as she belongs to the Tyrrels. So if you will not visit me, you can call on *her*—besides the Oxford fence-months will soon be over, and my boys will be again about the forest."

"I hope to be amongst the first, Sir Mark, to welcome your sister's arrival," and Grace slightly blushed as she spoke, adding with some emotion, "and I shall treasure her love the more, as I have never known the blessing of a mother's."

A general shaking of hands ensued, and the Baronet re-mounted Sorrel, who speedily carried him to the high road, just in time to be amused with an equipage which must have ludicrously answered an innkeeper's summons for a "first turn out." It was a neat postchaise, anything but neat in itself, even if it had not been littered all over with trunks, and baskets, and bandboxes; and it was drawn by two horses—a rusty black, and a dirty white, who seemed running a dead heat, though one trotted and the other cantered. As for the postilion, he looked as if he literally *farmed* the post-horse duty, for with a professional blue jacket and boots, he wore the straw hat and velveteens of a plough-boy. In lieu of a whip he carried a hazel stick, with which he occasionally belaboured the rusty black, whose heels seemed to possess all the grease that was wanted for the wheels—while ever and anon a bundle of tartan popped out of the near window, and exhorted the driver to make more speed, with the promises of "a saxpence to himsel." Instead of the pace getting better, however, it decreased, till at last the wretched over-driven cattle moved almost as slowly as those long-tailed black post-horses wherewith we post to eternity. Besides, at every fresh Scotch appeal from the window, the postilion, if so he might be called, pulled up to explain why he could go no faster.

"I telle, missus, the meare's leame and can't goo much fudder. She be fazzy, and it beant no use to whup she."

The Baronet was fain, therefore, to ride ahead, and leave these pilgrims to their progress, which was so tedious that the milestones — described by Sheridan as the most unsociable of all things, for you never see two of them together, — even the unsociable milestones seemed to keep each other at an unusual distance.

CHAPTER XV.

"The Campbells are coming, hurrah, hurrah?"
OLD BALLAD.

"Oh relieve me, or I shall lose my hearing;
You have raised a fury up into her tongue;
A parliament of women could not make
Such a confused noise as that she utters."
GREEN'S TU QUOQUE.

THE Baronet had been at home about half an hour, and old Deborah had just administered to him a biscuit and a bumper of Madeira, by way of removing the wire edge of his appetite, which had been well honed and stropped by his morning ride, when the sharp eye of the housekeeper happened to glance through a window which overlooked the avenue. Her attention was immediately fixed by some object moving along between the stately chesnuts which lined the approach to the Hall, but as yet too distant for her sight to define its character; at last it came near enough for her to venture on a definite announcement, in her usual style, her asthma literally breaking the news she communicated.

"Your honour there's a post — chaise and Oh Lord! — driven by a plough — boy in a blue — jacket and top — boots and mercy on us — the oddest looking woman — alive in a harlequin cloak — reaching out of the window — and waving — her arms — like mad!"

Sir Mark, looking out in the same direction, recognised at a glimpse the identical equipage which he had left on the high-road going so deliberately; but the driver, like a true jockey, had partly saved his horses for a rush at the end; and they now came smoking along as if literally boiling a gallop, to the visible terror of the woman in tartan, whose arms were working at the front window like the limbs of a telegraph. Onward he dashed, looking a winner all the way, to the Hall-door, where he pulled up with a suddenness that sent the two horses and the Scotch woman on their haunches, the shock at the same moment breaking the cords of a trunk which had been riding on the roof: the box immediately pitched off and burst open, and scattered such a quantity of miscellaneous articles, that like the fisherman in the Arabian Nights, when the geni emerged from the chest, every body wondered how such a bulk could have been contained in such a box. And as, in the same story, there came out in the first place "a very thick smoke which formed a great mist," so out of the Scotchwoman's trunk there ascended a dense cloud of dust, which appeared to have escaped from a large bag or poke of oatmeal, that had been destined to remind one Mr. Donald Cameron of the land of Cakes. Unluckily, most of it had dispersed in air, except one little residue, which a broken greybeard of Glenlivet had converted into a sort of brose: in the same fluid floated a dozen finnin haddies, while part of the stream served to unbleach a web of home-made linen, which had unfurled itself on the gravel. A bran-new "braw blue bonnet," intended for the sandy sconce of a nephew apprenticed to a London baker, pitched by chance on the head of Whop, a bull-terrier, who was barking at the catastrophe, and who in resentment worried the cap into ribbons. Torment and Teazer, two old fox-hounds who were at large on their parole, gobbled up a mutton-ham in a twinkling; and while Jupiter bolted a Sunday mutch, accidentally filled with real Scotch marmalade, Venus made short work with a batch of short-cake, ornamented in sugar-plums. In the middle of the medley sprawled a huge body of clothes, with silk and ging-

ham arms, and worsted and cotton legs. It was, in short, a total wreck, — at sight of which, as Lord Byron says,

"Then rose from earth to heaven the wild farewell, —"

for Tibbie Campbell, our tartan woman, could not have set up a louder funeral wail, or coronach, if Mac Callum More himself had just expired, with all his tail.

In the mean time, the Baronet hurried down to the hall-door, and received his sister in his arms as she alighted from the chaise.

"Egad, Kate," he exclaimed, after a hearty embrace and welcome, "what with that bang and smother, your vessel seemed to fire her own salute on her arrival. Why, I rode a good mile on your track without owning to it; though I ought to have challenged at the "harlequin cloak," as Debby calls it, as coming from the North."

"And I hope my kind old Deborah keeps her health," said the sister, affectionately shaking the withered hand of the housekeeper, who could only reply by an hysterical cackle and a low curtsey.

"The Scotchwoman, brother, is a very old and faithful servant of mine for whom I must beg house-room at the Hall."

"Use the Hall at your pleasure, Kate," returned the Baronet, "barring the dog-kennels and the stables. All the rest you may consider as your own manor, provided you'll join Deborah here with your tartan woman in the deputation. But after a long stage, you'll be glad of a bite and a sup, and so let us go up stairs. But first, do me the favour to take up the Scotchwoman, for she's within hearing of the ladies' kennel, and I should n't like them to learn her style of giving tongue."

The Scotchwoman, in truth, was literally realizing Sir Mark's description in more senses than one; for amongst her general cargo there happened to be some dried reindeer tongues, which her old sweetheart, the mate of the William Wallace, had imported from Riga to Dundee. As they were of the make and consistence of small cudgels, they were the most natural weapons at hand to be pelted successively at Jupiter, and Venus, and Torment, and Teazer, and Whop; who, with the instinctive sagacity of dogs, immediately galloped off with the missiles, that they might not serve for another discharge. At the same time she favoured the postboy with a volley of hard words, in the dialect of Fifeshire; to which he answered with an occasional shot, in the dialect of Berkshire, of course aggravating the misunderstanding.

"Wae worth that fule body, the maister at the inn," cried Tibbie, "for letting yon wiselike cannie lad gang aff the saddle, and trusting his naigs to a muckle havering gowk, wha kens nae mair aboot guiding them than a born natural!"

"Ecod, she do wag her tongue moightily; but I doant moind she," remarked Jolterhead, looking stoical with all his might; and quietly pocketing a liberal guerdon, along with the hire of the chaise, away he rattled again, pursued by a parting benediction.

"Ay, gang yer gate, the unchancy Deevil's buckie that ye are — I'm thinking it'll no be lang or ye coup the crans a' thegither, — and nae harm dune, gin the aivers suld ding out yer harns!"

"Whisht, Tibbie woman," said her mistress, interposing, "you're wanted to take the things up to my room; and never fash yourself about your own gear, for it shall all be made good."

"You're vary kind, my leddy," answered Tibbie, "but it's ill makin a silken pouch o' a sow's lug. Div ye think, mem, there's ony livin body in England can make short-breed, forbye marmalade — or div ye think the cnange-houses a' thegither haud sae muckle as ae mutchkin o' Glenlivit —

or div ye think the hail manty-makers in Lunnon can fashion siccan a mutch as yon illfaured hound is wearin in 's wame? Made gude! by my troth it's gay an likely to come to pass, when the wind blaws back the meal from a' the airts intill yon poke. Made gude, indeed! In coorse, mem, there 's blue bonnets to be gotten aff windie-straes for the gatherin; and nae doot mutton-hams is to be picket aff the grund like chuckie-stanes There 's wabs o' claith too, and napery, I 'se warrent, amang thae English, wha toil not neither do they spin, ony mair than King Solomon's lilies. But, as ye say, they 're a' to be made gude."—So saying, she applied herself to the removal of the packages, while the Baronet and his sister proceeded up stairs.

"And now, welcome again to the Hall, Kate," he said, kindly leading her into the drawing-room, "and I 'm glad at heart you 've run a ring back again to the old house, where you were roused."

"I 'm thinking, Mark," she replied, smiling, "that the old house has been getting itself an awful ill name since I left. Probably the ghost of Sir Walter has been playing its fearsome pranks beyond the common: but the postilion who should have driven us the last stage, fairly jumped out of the saddle at the mere mention of Tylney Hall; and as he resolutely refused to ride a foot in that direction, he got a discharge on the spot; and we were compelled to accept the services of the strange substitute you saw."

"Unlucky Joe, for a pony!" exclaimed Sir Mark, with a vehement slap of his hand on his buckskins, "the more luck, Kate, for you that he bolted; for I 've booked myself to ride over him roughshod. But now I think of it, you married into Scotland before Bedlamite was foaled. Sad changes in the family, Kate, since we parted—first Herbert, and then Bedlamite, and then your husband—but do n't hang down your head. I forgot, in naming it, that I was putting the loaded collar on you, when I ought to cry Hold up."

The widow of the Laird of Glencosie really drooped her head, and the tears stood in her eyes, at the Baronet's allusion to her losses; but she repressed her emotion, and inquired after her nephews, whom she had left as mere children.

"My dear Kate," said Sir Mark, adopting a confidential tone, "the boys are like my preserves, both a pleasure and a plague. You 've seen a hen when some Cockney ignoramus has furnished her with a hatch of eggs, half ducks and half chickens; the chickens will not take to the water, and the ducklings will not take to the land—and so it is with my two sons. You cannot get Ringwood into learning, or Raby out of it—and there I am on the edge of the pond, trying to keep the brood together. If Ringwood would read a little, and Raby would sport a little, it would be a good cross. Between ourselves, I wish they were more like St. Kitts; but you won't know him by that nomination—I mean Herbert's brown colt,—and a promising colt he is."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Deborah, with refreshments for the traveller.

"If you please, Madam,"—she said, with a smile crumpling her aged features—"the Scotch—servant is in a towering—passion in the kitchen—because we do n't—give her what—she wants, but Lord help us—nobody can make her out—it was something about—four hoors—and a few kail."

"Poor Tibbie is hungry, Deborah," said the lady, "and was asking about dinner time, and a little broth. By the way, you may tell the cook from me, not to let Tibbie meddle with the cookery, or she will make kail of every thing; and I mind my brother is no so fond of spoon-meat as they are in the North."

"Not I, by the Lord Harry," said Sir Mark; "I 'm for nothing but knife and fork. So lock up the pump-handle, Debby, and keep an eye to the

boilers, or we shall have an ounce of mutton swimming in a tureen of barley-water — I 've heard of their Scotch broths."

"They 're not so much amiss either," said the sister, "when you get used to them."

"May be not," said Mark, "with something to take after them, and provided you 're only going to sit in your arm-chair. But to fill your barrel with broth before riding to fox-hounds, you might as well give your hunter a bucket of water to help him to gallop. Take my word for it, Kate, that 's the very reason why there 's so little fox-hunting in Scotland."

"You would find some more formidable reasons, brother," said the lady, "in the shape of mountains, and lakes, and mosses. And now, Deborah, I will trouble you to show me to my chamber, and to send Tibbie to assist me in changing this dusty dress before dinner-time."

Accordingly Deborah ushered the lady, whom for the future we shall call Mrs. Hamilton, to her room; where she found the Scotchwoman actively engaged in unpacking the various trunks, and on uncording every one of which she gave vent to a fresh lamentation over the fate of her own chest. Tibbie Campbell was not much given to the melting mood; but her eyes, though not absolutely raining, were filled with a sort of Scotch mist; and never perhaps, during the forty years of her life, had she felt so depressed and downhearted as at the present moment, when her feelings seemed to be playing a medley of "Ha Til mi tulidh"—"Lochaber no more"—"Dowf and dowie"—"Waly waly"—and other national Songs of Sorrow.

"Wae 's me," she ejaculated, "it needs nae second-sight to ken the upshot—I 'll be warld-weary in less than nae time. To think o' comin fra bonnie Glencosie, and kith and kin, intil an unco place where it 's no possible to say to a livin creture 'come gie 's ye're cracks'—Robbie Crushoe, puir fallow, wasna waur aff amang a wheen sawvidges. Fient a word can I speak down bye but the hizzies maun a' be glowrin and girnin at me, like born gomerils, and cryin 'what 's yer wull?—what 's yer wull?'"

"Tibbie, lass," said her mistress, in a tone of considerable kindness, "you 're wiser than to look for a duck-egg in a corbie's nest; and you must not expect to hear the Scotch language from an English tongue. As for the chest, as your importation has been wrecked, I will furnish you with a cargo for exportation—and your friends at Glencosie shall no say of you, that out of sight is out of mind."

With this comfortable promise she judiciously tempered the troubles of the serving woman, who, nevertheless, could not help sighing as she turned over lace caps, and silk gowns, and other articles of female adornment, so spotless and splendid in comparison with her own ruined finery; which doubtless, on coming southward, she had contemplated in the same spirit as Winifred Jenkins, when she wrote about the yellow trolopee—"God he nose what havoc I shall make among the mail sects when I make my first appearance in this killing collar." However, she applied herself to her duties as tire woman; which she performed tolerably, considering the perturbation of her mind; for she only thrust a pin into her mistress's shoulder, while thinking of a certain trysting thorn at Glencosie, and perfumed a handkerchief with sal volatile instead of lavender, during a mental visit to Glencosie Kirk—an image associated with a sound which was ringing in her ears.

"Od, Sirs," she exclaimed, "but ye guide matters an unco gate in the south. I 've aye been tauld the English are no sae keen to harken till the meenister as some ither folk—but Lorsh keep us, Mem, religion maun hae the worst o 't, where the kirk-bell begins jowing just when a body 's ganging till their four-hoors."

"The ringing you hear, Tibbie," said her mistress, smiling, "is nothing

but the dinner-bell, calling me to a service where every one is their own minister."

So saying, she descended and rejoined her brother at the dinner-table, where the conversation, as may easily be supposed, took a retrospective turn, in which Herbert, Glencosie, Bedlamite, Ringwood, Raby, and St. Kitts, were the principal subjects. The future, however, was not overlooked by the baronet; who, in the fulness of his heart, confided to his sister his matrimonial project concerning Ringwood and Grace Rivers, to which she replied by a judicious admonition against match-making; for she had experienced some of the evils of enforced marriages in her own union with the northern Laird — who was said to have courted the mother by way of winning the daughter.

"For the love of heaven, Mark," she said, "neither make nor meddle in marriage; but let the young people select their own favourites. Love is a plant of deep growth and root; and he is a bad gardener who puts it into the head, instead of letting it spring from the heart. If you are so fond of Grace Rivers as you say, you can do the dear girl no better kindness than to let her affections take their own natural course. A maiden's heart, with all its sensitive feelings and fancies, is like one of our drawers full of delicate laces, and gossamer muslins and gauzes, — fabrics of too tender a texture to be turned over and rumpled by the rough hand of a father or a brother. Remember the appeal of poor Polly in the Beggar's Opera —

"Can love be controlled by advice?
Will Cupid our mothers obey?"

A serious question, Mark, which my own heart has been answering in the negative for these twelve years past."

"I do not know," said the Baronet, "but that you may be right about Grace and her father. To be sure the old cast-iron Justice would sign her marriage mittimus and send her off to church just as he 'd commit a gipsy-jade to the county jail; and maybe with a special constable for a bridesman. No, Kate, I 'm not for coupling-up young people by the neck, when they 're perhaps not fitter to run together than Lightning and Lounger, or a greyhound with a turnspit: but as to Ringwood and Grace, you might search the kingdom for a better match, whether for age, or shape, or temper."

"Well, brother," said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing, "I will only remind you of a saying which is, or ought to be, a Scotch proverb — "It 's ill to begin bigging at the tap o' the lum.' It 's very possible that Grace may prefer Raby to Ringwood, or Walter to either, and, as the trout said to the fisherman, when he fell into the mill dam, 'where are you then?'"

"Your hedge is a stiff one to get over," said Sir Mark, with equal good humour, "but, as the farmer's mare said, when he tried to get before the deer, 'it 's an event not likely to come off.' Ringwood against the field for a thousand — and here comes a backer who would stand half of the bet."

The personage thus alluded to, unceremoniously entered the room as the Baronet spoke; he made a bow, indeed, when introduced to Mrs. Hamilton, and then, with a familiar nod to Sir Mark, he drew a chair to the table and helped himself to a glass of claret, which he immediately drank off with a deep sigh of enjoyment. A second followed, and then a third, before he made answer to the Baronet's inquiry whether he had met with any sport.

"Damned a bit," he replied, first yawning, and then diving his hands into his pockets — stretching out his legs — and looking downward, in the very attitude of the nobleman in the second plate of Marriage A-la-mode. "Met at Hawksley — a blank. Then to Foxcote — blank again; Windmills

Grange — ditto; ditto at Golder's Gorse. Away to Hollington — found a vixen, — and whipped off."

"And the field," inquired Sir Mark, "were there many with the button?"

"Not a soul but the Farmers and myself — barring young Twigg; a queer one by Jove. Rode a bay pony very short in the legs, and wore a scarlet coat very long in the skirts — looked devilish like general post riding proxy for twopenny."

"Now I think of it," said the Baronet, "I remember his father saying he had taken to hunting ever since being at Epping Forest on an Easter Monday. By the way, Kate, I forgot to tell you we have some distant relations settled very near us — a grandson of old Theophilus Tyrrel."

"As game a fellow, Madam," added the visiter, "as ever laid the long odds. Knew old Theophilus well — met him often at Newmarket — and meant to do the civil thing by his great-grandson, Twigg junior; but it 's no go — he 'll never be dab at anything! Lent him my cats last Friday for a rabbiting, and he worked them with collar and string. Killed only one old doe rabbit — and contrived to hang the dog ferret for it, as dead as Theodore Gardelle!"

"I 'm afraid," said Sir Mark, shaking his head, "the family will do little credit to the Tyrrels, when it comes to sporting. As for Twigg himself, he won't stand within two yards of a horse; and even then he watches its heels, as if the animal had said to him, 'consider yourself kicked.' But come, fill up a bumper, and let 's have the old standing toast of the hunt — "here 's Pitt in the cabinet, and Fox in the field.' "

"Here 's Pitt and Fox, then," said the guest, taking off his bumper; "and now for another," he added, as he closed the door after Mrs. Hamilton, who had taken the toast as a hint to retire, "'here 's to all maids, wives, and widows.' Deserves three times three," he said, giving his empty glass a flourish in the air, "but want Ringwood to give us the hips. When will he be home from that d—d University?"

"After Hilary Term," said Sir Mark, "which is about the end of March."

"Confound Hilary, and his terms to boot!" cried the other, "might know better than to keep young fellows haltered up in his old musty stalls in the hunting season. Don't see why all the learning can't be done while the nags are summering at grass; but guess how it is — old Hilary don't hunt. A regular waddler — weighs sixteen stone — double chin — buz wig — shovel-hat, and all that. A thousand pities, though! — think there 's an otter in the Willow Brook — know there 's a badger in Warner's Wood."

The conversation now took a turn of little interest except to the two sportsmen engaged in it, consisting of a series of such narratives as may be found daily under the usual heading of "Extraordinary Fox-chase," or "Remarkable Run with Mr. So-and-So's hounds." Instead, therefore, of circumstantially drawing Cubsy Cover — finding at Barkham — losing at Foilham — making a cast towards Sniffington — running him to East Splitting — then to West Splitting — throwing up again at Botherham — challenging at the Hand-post — rattling off to Bumpington — changing him at Shufflebury — trying back to Puzzleworth — hark forward again to Skurry Mead — viewing him at High Squinny — hard pressing him through Squashy Bottom, leaving Tidy Hall to the left — making in a direct line for Killingham — through Furrow Field, Clayworth, Splashbury, Muddington, Dustworth, Great Purley, and Little Purley, Upper Spraining, and Lower Spraining — one hour and forty-five minutes — and losing him up a drain at Long Nikey; — instead of bestowing all this tediousness on the reader, we will give a brief description of Sir Mark's familiar.

Mr. Edward Somerville, commonly called "Squire Ned," was one of those cheerful, ingenious, obliging persons, with a host of little accomplishments, who, like Will Wimble, are sure to find a welcome in every house. In fact, he had the run of the parish, from the fireside of the Manor House and Rectory, to the chimney-corner of the small farmer. As the popular character well expressed of him, he was every body's friend, and nobody's enemy but his own; the latter clause referring to various personal injuries which he had accidentally incurred at his own hands. He had lost the sight of his left eye through some experiments in percussion firing, (an invention time has since ripened,) — and a vermin trap of his own construction had snapped off two of his fingers; his left arm had been fractured by a kick from a colt of his own breaking; and he limped a little in walking, through falling with a scaffold of his own contrivance, while superintending the erection of a cottage on an original plan. But of the cottage more anon. In the field he was invaluable — nobody could find a hare — mark down a cock — or make a cast, so well as the Squire: and he was almost as indispensable at the Hall, particularly when the Baronet had a fit of the gout, which only allowed him to kill his fox at second-hand in Ned's description. Moreover he could listen as well as talk; and, above all, was an indefatigable player at backgammon or cribbage, Sir Mark's favourite games, and at which Ringwood, Raby, and even the Creole, were too apt to degenerate into "sleeping partners."

It was presumed that Ned was either a bachelor or a widower, for nobody ever ascertained which; all that could be learned from him was, that "when he put on his hat he covered his whole family." Indeed, he was never known to be visited by any one who claimed the remotest relationship; — but in default of kin he centred his whole affection on Ringwood, whom he loved with as much love as some economical fathers would make suffice for a long dozen of sons.

The curious were equally at fault about his means of living; he had bought a few acres of freehold, on which he had built himself a cottage; and he paid ready money for everything; which was all that was known with regard to his revenue. As for the cottage, it was a perfect Merlin's cabinet of mechanical contrivances, such as "open sesame" doors, self-acting windows, spring closet, and knick-knacks in clock-work; in short, it contained such a century, or rather Millennium of Inventions, that if each had claimed its gold or silver medal from the Society of Arts, the Arthur Aikin of that period must have gone with all his firm into the Gazette. One part of the building, however, still held Ned's ingenuity at defiance, namely, an uncompromising chimney, the draft of which, according to the Polish game of drafts, was apt to take backwards, and discharge all the smoke into his sitting-room. In consequence, to the great amusement of the neighbourhood, the refractory pot was seen about once a month with a new cowl on its head, each differing quite as much in shape and fashion from its predecessor as the last new bonnet from Paris.

To return to the Hall. After killing a score of foxes over again, the Baronet and the Squire adjourned to the drawing-room, where, after tea, Mrs. Hamilton retiring early, they betook themselves to one of the favourite games; nor did they give over throwing dice, and taking up blots, and taking off men, till towards the smallest of the small hours; — for like Gargantua and Pantagruel, in Rabelais, they had appetites not to be satisfied by any ordinary quantity of gammons.

CHAPTER XVI.

"She is far from the land"———

MOORE'S IRISH MELODIES.

"One day whilst under sail we were becalmed near a little island, even almost with the surface of the water, which resembled a green meadow. The Captain ordered his sails to be furled, and permitted such persons as had a mind to land upon the island, amongst whom I was one. But while we were diverting ourselves with eating and drinking, and recovering ourselves from the fatigue of the sea, the island on a sudden trembled and shook us terribly * * * * For what we took for an island, was only the back of a whale."

SINBAD'S FIRST VOYAGE.

"As the day is bright, and the air mild," said Mrs. Hamilton, when she rose the next morning from the breakfast-table, "I should enjoy a stroll in the pleasure grounds and the Park; but I'll not trespass on your time, Mark, for I shall take Tibbie with me; the poor body will die else of suppressed Scotch."

Accordingly she sent a summons by the footman for Tibbie, who quickly made her appearance in her usual morning-dress, part of which, indeed, belonged to the night; namely, a short white jacket, and a cap, the strings, of which, however, were now untied, allowing two lappets to hang down by the side of her face, like the ears of a beagle; her lower garment was a dark blue petticoat, and as for her shoes, she held them in her right hand, and her stockings were in her left.

"Hoot awa', Tibbie," exclaimed her mistress, somewhat disconcerted at the apparition, "ye ought to have minded that you're no at Glencosie the noo. — Did'nt I forewarn ye against gangin barefoot, while ye were dressing me this very morning?"

"It's no my wyte, Mem," replied Tibbie, very indignantly, "the flunkie tauld me I was wanted momently — Deil hae me, but I'se gie him a heezie for't — the off-taking ne'er-do-weel! my certie, he maun be worth his fee, a daundering swankie, that's aye daffin wi' the limmers and taupies — that's a' his darg."

"Well, well," interrupted her mistress, "enough said — you're wanted to walk with me, so go to your busking" — and away padded the Scotchwoman to prepare herself for the promenade.

"Guineas to shillings," said the Baronet, "it was a trick of Jerry's to hurry up Tibbie in her dishabille: I'll warrant she's as good as a cock at Shrovetide, for 'em to fling at in the kitchen. But, by Jove! she seems able to hold her own against them all, like an old ram in a dog-kennel!"

"No fear of Tibbie among the women," said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing, "if they measure tongues with her, she will have a claymore against a dirk: as for the men, she cowed them all at Glencosie, not excepting the Laird himself. But she's a faithful devoted creature; and to save or serve me would walk on hot ploughshares, ay, as barefoot as you saw her just now." So saying she retired to put on her bonnet and shawl; and soon afterwards the Baronet, who had watched at the window, saw her walking in the garden, followed by Tibbie in shoes and hose; the rest of her costume, whatever it might be, even to her cap, being enveloped in the memorable "Harlequin cloak."

The alterations which twelve years, as well as the hand of man, had wrought in the pleasure-grounds, fully occupied the attention of Mrs. Hamilton; and Tibbie, somewhat dashed by the rebuke and the ridicule which attended her morning debût, walked after her equally silent, and

equally ruminative, on the wonderful changes which only four days had effected in all that concerned herself.

At last the lady stopped before some moss-grown fragments of what had once been a summer-house, formerly her favourite retreat, but now in ruins. As she looked at the masses of brickwork which cumbered the ground, she could not help sighing, and murmuring a reflection on the desolation she surveyed.

"This then is all that remains of my beautiful summer-house, where I spent so many happy hours! — But the pleasure is dead and gone; and it is better, perhaps, that its abode should perish too. Tibbie," she continued, addressing her follower, "you would little think, lass, that yonder ruin was once as bonnie a bower for a lady as ever was sung of in an auld-warld ballad."

There is an old superstition, that a ghost may not speak till it has been spoken to; and the Scotch woman's tongue seemed to have been spell-bound by some similar injunction; for the moment she was thus appealed to, she began to talk like a spirit pressed for time to say all its say before cock-crow.

"O mem," she exclaimed, "Gude send there may be nae waur ruining than yon! We 're no come ae blink owre sune; mortal fut never cam intil a hoos in sairer need o' a redding-up. Lorsh keep us, the Laird wad be for risin up frae the mouls an' there were sic wastry at Glencosie. As fac's death, I saw yon cheil in the scarlet coatie, and the corked breeks, — the In-whupper I think they ca' him — devoorin the cauld beef, and the loaf-breed, and drinkin yill, nae less, till his parritch-time! And yon silly doited carline, Deborah, to stand lookin on at the fellow without flyting, — no but it wad be fushionless flyting, wi' siccan a hoast. Then there's thae yowlin dowgs out-bye maun hae mair otmeal than wad be a neivefu' the piece to the hale generation o' gaberlunzies and blue-gowns. Folk say Sir Mark Tirl has gowd by gowpens — but siller has an end to 't as weel 's a coo's tail — there maun be a down-come — there maun be a down-come."

"Never fash yourself about the siller, Tibbie," replied her mistress, "I'll answer for its lasting out from one year's end to another."

"And for my part," answered Tibbie, "I'll no neglect ony thing to haud the gear thegither. As for the In-whupper, I'm thinking I'll mak him as gleg's a gled to sup crowdy; wi' a taste o' a sower cog at an orra time! But, O mem! would it no be a providential thing, and I'm sure it's my daily peteetion til the Throne of Grace, that He wad send down the hydrophoby among they wastful tykes, and gar ilk ane devoor his neebour, by way o' sunkets? But the dowgs are naething! There's thretty naigs for the tod-hunting, for I countit them myself — mair by token, I never saw sae mony horses thegither but ance, when the cawvalry were pitting down the meal-mob at Dundee. I'm tauld butcher-meat is at tenpence the pund — but, O mem what maun be the price o' tod's-flesh grantin it ever cam intil an ashet, het or cauld!

"If you are wise, Tibbie woman," said Mrs. Hamilton, "you will not make or meddle with either dogs or horses at Tylney Hall."

"Weel," replied Tibbie, adroitly changing her point of attack, "folk that will to Cupar maun to Cupar. As weel, aiblins, be eaten out of house and ha' by hounds and horses, as by a wheen upsettin flunkies, and fliskma-hoys. The vary fees o' 'em wad be a tocher for a laird's daughter! But the tae half o' them shall ken the but frae the ben, or the mouth's dune, as shure's my name's Cowmel. I jalouse the huntsman and the in-whuppers havena sae muckle wark out-bye, but that they can stand ahint the chairs, and hand aboot the ashets. Div ye no think, mem, ane of the in-whuppers might be spared whiles to drive the coach: for in course, mem, he can whup horses as weel as dowgs?"

In this strain Tibbie's tongue continued to run on for some time, without any interruption from her mistress, who was not a little amused at the whimsical alterations that were suggested in her brother's household. They had now turned into the park, and were skirting a very extensive sheet of water, which lay between them and the house; when at an exclamation from Tibbie, the lady looked towards the avenue, prepared to see "the King comin or the provost o' Edenbro' at the least."

In truth a yellow-bodied carriage, with a coachman and footman in sky-blue-and-orange liveries, a scarlet hammercloth, and two gray horses, with "lots of bright brass bees on the harness," made a considerable glitter in the sunshine, as it swept along towards the Hall. At some distance in the rear, followed a dark green chariot, with drab liveries, drawn by two bays; the whole equipage bearing the same proportion in splendour to the preceding one, as the Lord Mayor's private carriage, to that showy gilt gingerbread vehicle, his coach of state. While the Scotchwoman gazed with unfeigned admiration at the procession, her mistress looked with some embarrassment, first at the house, and then at the water, a sheet not very broad, but of considerable length.

"Oh, Tibbie," she exclaimed, "we are in a pretty dilemma! Yonder go visiters to the Hall; and here am I, who ought to meet them, on the wrong side of the lake. It will take half an hour's walking to get round it at either end."

"Never fash yoursel, mem, aboot that," replied Tibbie, "while there's yon bit boat to the fore. I'll tak ye o'er in no time; I ken that wark weel! Mony's the time I've been wi' Saundy in the coble, puir fallow, before he went to the sea."

So saying she jumped into the boat with great agility, and cast off a rope at the stern, by which it was made fast to a post on the shore; the wind at the same moment making a sail of her "Harlequin cloak," and blowing the skiff at the rate of nine knots an hour towards the middle of the water.

"I have no much faith," muttered Mrs. Hamilton, "in Tibbie's seamanship. But for God's sake, what's the matter?" she called out to her ferry-woman, seeing that she wrung her hands and went through other panto-mimical signals of distress.

"Oh mem, oh my leddy," shouted Tibbie, "there's nae sculls; and the ill-faured boat is chained wi' a chain at it's neb! Here I maun sit till doomsday, gin I canna brak the chain, or pu' up the bottom o' the loch!"

"Deuce take the woman, with her boating," said Mrs. Hamilton, "she's moored there fast enough!" The little vessel indeed, after swinging round, had brought up with its head to the wind; and there, in the stern, sat the Tartan woman, a second Lady of the Lake,

> "With eyes upraised and lips apart,
> Like monument of Grecian art,"

and particularly that monument associated with "sedet æternumque sedebit."

"There's nothing to be done," said Mrs. Hamilton, "but to sit steady till I can send somebody from the Hall."

"Od mem," shouted Tibbie, "I'm gayan like to sit steady when there's a hole in the boat, that lets a' the water in the moment I tak of my thoom. Lord' sake, mem, dinna be lang sending! But I'm thinkin, amang a' thae braw court gentry, ye'll mind nae mair o' puir Tibbie Cawmel than o' a pickmaw.

"I would as soon forget a mermaid, if I had seen one," answered Mrs. Hamilton; and, in spite of the saying that "women and cows should never run," she set off at her best speed for the Hall, whence she despatched the first man-servant she met, to the rescue of her handmaiden. After a hasty toilet, she then made her appearance in the drawing-room, where she found

her brother, and was introduced to his visiters, namely, Mr. Mrs. and Miss Twigg, and T. Twigg, junior; Mr. Justice Rivers, and his fair daughter Grace. In reply to a remark from the Baronet, on the length of her walk, she entered into a narrative of poor Tibbie's mishap; Twigg fidgeting on his seat during the description, like an impatient orator who had something to say on the matter in hand; but when he heard of the boat swinging off into the middle of the water, he could contain no longer.

"Damn all boating," he exclaimed abruptly, "I knew how it would end! I was once near being boated into eternity myself."

"Don't mention it," said Mrs. Twigg, "the remembrance sets me all of a shiver."

"But I *will* mention it, Madam," answered Twigg, "for as there are young people present," here he looked at Miss Rivers, "it may serve as a warning. You must know, Mrs. T. and self determined last summer to take a holyday, and so we took advantage of a general fast and shut-up, for a day's pleasure."

"As you speak before young persons," interrupted the Justice, "and by way of warning, I feel bound in duty to remark, that his Majesty's Royal Proclamation ought to have been better observed."

"And so he does, Sir," interposed Mrs. Twigg; "we have always fasted religiously, ever since we was able to afford it. Every Shrove-Tuesday we have pancakes, as sure as the day comes; and hot cross-buns on Good Friday, and salt fish and egg-sauce on Ash-Wednesday."

"Nobody keeps Lent stricter than I do," continued Twigg, "but, says you, a man that has known what it is to want a meal, ought to know how to fast. The time has been when salt fish with egg sauce, and pancakes, would have been like a Lord Mayor's Feast. But fasting has nothing to do with a day's pleasure. Well, my own vote was for Hornsey-wood house; but as the boys are fond of rowing, they were both for boating up to Richmond, and so was Matilda, and Mrs T. — that we might have a picnicking cold collection on the grass."

"I'll never dine on any grass again, except sparrow-grass," said Mrs. Twigg, with a laugh at her own joke; "it gave me the lumbargo for a month. I knew how the damp would rise with water all around us; but Mr. T. was obstinate, and insisted on laying the cloth on a little island, to be like Robinson Crusoe."

"It was called an Ait," said Miss Twigg affectedly, "and had a verdant tree in the middle."

"To be sure," said Twigg gravely, "I ought to have remembered that the Thames was a tidy river, and always rising and falling like the stocks. Well, there we were — hamper unpacked — cloth spread — pigeon pie — cold ham — cold fowl — cold punch — everything cold and comfortable — when all at once, says Mrs. T. with a scream, "Mercy on us, the island 's getting littler!' And sure enough, as we watched, the water kept creeping on and creeping on, till it came to the edge of the table-cloth and threatened to swallow up everything! There we were, in eminent danger, and no boat; for those d — d boys had gone up the d — d river after some d — d swans."

"Haw! haw! haw!" burst out the graceless Twigg, junior; "and when we came back, and looked for the island, there was 'Tilda singing out, on the top of the tree; and mother roosting a little further down; with father hugging the trunk, up to his coat-flaps in water!"

"None of your levity, Sir," said Twigg very sternly: "if I'd been drowned through your swan-hopping, you would n't be in the station in life you enjoy."

"Stealing a king's swan, young man," said the Justice solemnly, "is capital felony, without benefit of clergy."

"I assure you, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," resumed Twigg, "my reflections, when I saw the devouring element raging round us, was very serious — very serious indeed! Here's a situation, thinks I, for a man of my property."

"Egad!" said Sir Mark, smiling, "or for a man of no property."

"I declare I could have cried with vexation," said Mrs. Twigg, "to see the good table-cloth floating away; and the hamper, and all the nice eatables, being squamped. As for the silver forks and plate, it was all lost in the deep; for though we paid a waterman something handsome, to look for them when the island came up again, he never brought us nothing but a mustard-pot full of mud!"

"Very provoking indeed, madam," said the Baronet. "But if you're fond of angling," he continued, addressing Twigg, "you should have got a punt, and fished on the spot directly; for what with the pigeon-pie, the cold ham, and so forth, you had the ground baited rarely for barbel. I only hope, Grace, that you will not take fright at this story, and give up our boat excursions on the lake?"

"Certainly not," answered Grace, "while the vessel has so skilful a master as the Squire, and so expert a mate as Ringwood."

"Oh, it must be delightful," exclaimed Miss Twigg. "For my own part, I don't mean to give up going on the water — and lakes are so romantic! And besides, nobody ever endangers and frightens one, except one's own brothers."

"It's all your own fault," said young Twigg, "if sisters didn't squawk out so, and go into kicking hysterics, there'd be no fun in frightening 'em. But I'll be bound Miss Rivers knows better how to behave in a boat."

"I really cannot answer for my behaviour," said Grace, "if I had to climb into a tree for my life, like King Charles the Second."

"Well, I'll warrant then, you're no coward on land, Miss," said young Twigg, with as gallant an air as he could assume; "would you believe it, mother made faces all the way here, and would have it the horses were running away — though nothing was taking fright but herself. And there's 'Tilda won't walk out for fear, 'cause she's three times seen a dark woman, like a gipsy, about the lanes."

"As for me," said Mrs. Twigg, "I don't care who knows it, but I was n't used to a carriage till late in life: and two hackney-coach horses, you know, Sir Mark, is one thing, and a pair of spirity rumbustical high-mettled animals, is another; and they're mettlesome enough, though Mr. T. bought grays on purpose, as being the oldest, and likely to be most steadiest."

"Pooh, pooh, Mrs. T." said Mr. Twigg, "the horses go no better than they should do; only you're so confoundedly timid! Matilda's right though, about the brown woman, for I don't half like her myself. I'm sure she's a thief, by her face; and says you, a man ought to know what a thieving face is, who has set as sheriff at the Old Bailey. I'll lay sixpence she has often been worshipped before Mr. Justice Rivers here."

"I really cannot say, Sir," returned the Justice; "but there are laws against trespassers and vagrants — and if the woman has damaged your property or annoyed you in person, by begging — I should be happy, on your information, — to discharge my duty as a magistrate."

"Why as for my property," answered Twigg, "I can't say she has ever taken so much as a stick out of a hedge, or a mushroom from a field; and so far from begging, the only copper I ever chucked to her, she duck-and-draked it into a pond! My lady, thinks I, if you'd begun life like me, you'd know a hapenny's a hapenny."

"There is something mysterious about her, that is certain," said Miss Twigg, "and she mutters to herself so, I should fancy she was a witch, only she does not look old enough."

"I believe, mem," inquired Mrs. Twigg, addressing Mrs. Hamilton, "you are a good deal troubled with witches in Scotland; I have been reading about them in Macbeth."

"They are not so rife in the north, Madam, as they were two hundred years ago," replied Mrs. Hamilton, with difficulty composing her face. "Some few, and especially the Highlanders, still believe in the influence of the evil eye; and attribute to it a mortality among their cattle, or a dearth in their dairies."

"You hear *that*, Mr. Twigg," said his lady with an awe-struck face, and a tone almost sepulchral. "We make no butter with four cows, — and have n't a drop of cream to our teas. And as to cattle going into the Bills of Mortality, did n't four sucking pigs die of the measles last week, just as we 'd made up our minds who to send 'em to? And didn't all our chickens go in pips, as fast as they was ready for the spit? And did n't the calf disappear the very day after it was weaned — as if by magic? Sir Mark, pray what is your opinion?"

"Faith, Madam," said Sir Mark, "it 's my belief there is n't a witch in the parish, — let alone little Grace here. And if Grace had an evil eye in her head, she would have murrained a cross-grained cow that chased her last summer, — but Ringwood ran up just at pancake-time, and stopped the tossing."

"And pray, Mr. Justice Rivers, what is your opinion of our strange losses?" inquired the bewildered Mrs. Twigg.

"Felony, Madam — larceny — petty larceny — fraud — embezzlement, and breach of trust," responded the justice; "and the proper remedy is confinement, — whipping — branding — hard labour — transportation — or HANGING!" he added in a tone that made the querist involuntarily look up at his head for a black cap.

"I knew I was right!" exclaimed Twigg, "from the very first day we came to the Hive, I 've suspected every servant we have! I look into every thing too, with my own eyes; but they 're cheating me — I know it — they 're cheating me every hour of the day — and of the night too, d—n them! I shall never close my eyes in peace again!"

"Nor I neither, my dear," sighed his help-mate, "for we must burn a light in our room for the future — and that 's sure to keep me broad awake."

"It 's very hard," said Twigg, "for a man of my property to be always gnawed and nibbled at by vermin, like a cheese among rats and mice. I 'll be bound at this very moment, if one knew what was doing behind backs — "

"My dear Mr. T." exclaimed his partner, jumping up from her chair as if she had discovered a pin in it, — "we are really staying longer than is agreeable to propriety at a first visit! But I 'm sure Sir Mark will excuse."

So saying she made a motion as if to sit down again, but it was only a curtsey; and then Miss Twigg rose and performed a very elaborate curtsey, as if for the instruction of her mother; Twigg on his own part made one of those tradesman-like bows, when the body bends, but the legs cannot for the counter, — while his son kept repeating his ducks and bobs at Miss Rivers, whose eyes unfortunately would not "come to the bower." Every body received one invite (and some two or three) to visit the Apiary at Hollington; and then the family scrambled out of the room, and into the carriage. — Pompey jumped up behind, — and again yellow pannels, scarlet hammer-cloth, sky-blue-and-orange, gray horses, and bright brass bees, went glittering down the avenue.

As soon as they were gone, Grace and Mrs. Hamilton looked at each other for a moment, and then burst into an involuntary laugh; in which

they were joined by Sir Mark; while even the stern features of the magistrate relaxed into one of his grim smiles.

"Well Grace," said the Baronet, "do you think you shall avail yourself of your invitation to the Hive?"

"I fear I shall not venture," replied Grace. "To be candid, I do not admire their way of making honey, — they seem to gather it all from stinging-nettles."

"And I," added the magistrate, "do not approve of their mode of complying with Royal and Ecclesiastical ordinances: nor of the young man's freedom in sporting over private manors. You heard his story of the pheasants, Sir Mark — nothing less than a direct act of poaching, in the eye of the law." ——

"Ignorance, neighbour — mere ignorance, and town-breeding," returned Sir Mark, "you cannot expect a London street-mongrel to come down and hunt his game like a staunch pointer. But 'ware hat! I have a dinner in the house, that will want justice done to it, and egad, you shall not stir, but on your own recognizance to return at five o'clock, and in the mean time, you may as well leave Grace with Kate here, by way of bail."

To these terms, after some demur, his worship assented; to the great delight of his daughter, who had already conceived an instinctive liking for Mrs. Hamilton, which was as readily returned, for no one could remain long in Grace's company without a strong prepossession in her favour, even when she had not the advantage of such a foil as the over-dressed and under-bred Miss Twigg. The latter, like a crimson carnation, showy but artificial, and the former like a moss-rose, lovely, natural, sweet, and blushing from the rich warmth of its own heart.

The dark-green chariot again received the magistrate, and carried him back to Hawksley, that he might impartially re-examine the parties suspected of murder at Hazel Bridge, by hearing the nothing they had to say for themselves, and the everything that everybody had to say against them.

As soon as the Justice was gone, Sir Mark went to inspect his hounds, and Mrs. Hamilton sent a summons to Tibbie, preparing Miss Rivers beforehand to see a daughter of Eve almost as original as her great mother.

"Well, Tibbie," inquired her mistress, "how did ye get landed — I hope you were not wet?"

"Ou mem," answered Tibbie, "I've had a wearifu' time o't. Ye may thole it was doom's cauld on the loch; and I'ze no uphaud but I thocht whiles o' a wee drappie o' hett toddy — but wae's me, says I, div ye no mind, lass, it was a' skailed wi' the kist? And Tibbie woman, says I, the King himsel, or the Provost o' London is up by at the Ha' — an here ye are sittin without sae muckle as ae keek o' him to write o' to Glencosie. 'Od, mem, gin Sandy were fleeching at me himsel — I 'm thinking he 'd no fleech me into a boat after yon!"

"You shall have something warm to cure the cold, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "and although you have wanted a sight of the King, the Provost is coming back here to his dinner; and I shall need your help in dressing. Away with ye then to my chamber, and set the toilette in order," — and off Tibbie trotted; leaving the two ladies to that kind of small talk, which is so very small that it would not print well except in a Diamond Edition."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Hark you, friend, I suppose you don't
Come within the Vagrant Act; I suppose
You have some settled habitation?"

JUSTICE WOODCOCK.

"You have a daughter, but you want a son;
I have a son, Sir, but I want a daughter;
Then why not cure our double wants in one.
While Heralds' arms, and Love's, together quarter?"

ANON.

——"Tis often seen,
Adoption strives with Nature; and choice breeds
A native slip to us from foreign seeds."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

THE Justice kept his appointment. At five o'clock he returned to the Hall with his hunger much sharpened by the re-examination of the twelve suspected persons; a process which took off the edge of their stomachs in the same proportion, so that they went back to durance with little more appetite than Mr. Wordsworth's cattle, forty of which ate only like one.

"I am come to surrender to my bail," said the magistrate, as he entered the drawing-room. "It has been sharp work though, considering the heaviness of my calendar. I have had to whip and spur."

"Ay, I'll warrant the car of Juggernaut has not been at a stand-still in the interval," replied the Baronet, "but has been doing its twelve miles an hour."

"The public business has indeed advanced a stage," replied the magistrate. "I have discovered a clue to the murderers; and moreover I have made acquaintance with the brown woman who so frightened your citizen. I rather think she will wish we had never been on speaking terms. I assure you I read her a lecture — with my black cap on, as Grace calls it, when I use language necessarily severe."

"I pity her then," said Grace, in an under-tone to Mrs. Hamilton; "to a man even his rebukes and frowns must be terrible; but they must strike a woman to the earth!"

"And pray, Sir, what was the brown woman's offence?" inquired Mrs. Hamilton, turning round somewhat abruptly towards Mr. Rivers.

"She had done nothing morally wrong, Madam," replied the Justice, "but as she had no ostensible means of living, and was personally unknown to any one in the parish, Gregory, the constable, apprehended her, and brought her before me, that she might give an account of herself."

"And thereby gratify the curiosity of the village," said the Baronet, "by means of its gossip-monger, old Gregory. I hope when he had her at bay, she flew at him like a marten-cat, and gave him a taste of her claws!"

"I can assure you, Sir Mark," said the Justice, "your client is quite competent to her own defence. In the whole course of my experience, and I have been many years in the commission, I never encountered such a temper for violence, or such a tongue for what I may even call eloquence. Many magistrates, of less standing and nerve, would perhaps have been moved by it to forget that their province is to punish not to pity. But a man before whom the human heart has been daily, almost hourly, laid bare, and who knows, by professional investigation and dissection, that it is, as described in Scripture, deceitful and desperately wicked, — such a man is

proof against that specious but spurious eloquence, which flows equally from the well-educated and the illiterate, to avert the penalty of crime, — from the lordly state traitor who sees the axe and the block in perspective, to the base-born felon who pleads with a rope round his neck."

"Well, heaven bless his Majesty," exclaimed the Baronet, "for not thinking, when he is making justices, of Mark Tyrrel! I can hunt anything that goes upon four legs; but when it comes to running down any creature upon two, whether man or woman, I'm a mere cur. I remember when Judge Jenkinson came our circuit, I thought it my duty to attend at the Assizes, out of respect to his Lordship; but I was dead beat at my first trial. They brought in a prisoner, like a bag-fox, and turned him down in the middle of the whole pack of judges, and jailers, and lawyers, and witnesses, without a chance for his life. He was mobbed to death — he was, by Jove!"

"Fortunately for the interests of social order," returned the magistrate, "nature makes some men of a sterner stuff. As a mere instrument of the law, a criminal judge ought no more to be expected to sympathize, than the gallows itself. Were the sword of justice so softly tempered, that every blow made a notch in its own edge, we should soon have it worn down to the hilt. Such was not the metal of the elder Brutus, when he doomed the son of his own loins to death, and presided at the execution!"

"Oh, that horrid Judgment of Brutus!" said Grace in an aside to Mrs. Hamilton. "It hangs over the fire-place in the study; and my father sets his features by the picture, as if it were a mirror. I wish I could say he did not regulate his feelings sometimes by the same model; — but many a poor poacher that I have almost begged off, has owed the harshness of his sentence to a glance at the odious Roman stoic."

"Excuse my curiosity, Sir," said Mrs. Hamilton, again addressing the Justice, — "but at the risk of being classed by my brother amongst the village gossips, I am really curious to know more of this mysterious woman, whether she is young or old, handsome or ugly?"

"She possesses at least the remains of beauty, Madam," replied the magistrate. "As for age, she may be either fifty or thirty; for irregular habits, vice, hard fare, and exposure to weather, cause considerable difference in the external signs. But I should state her at not more than forty, to judge from the brightness of her black eyes and the fulness of her figure; her arms, indeed, which she constantly used in gesticulation, were round and beautifully turned."

"Poor creature," exclaimed Grace, "she had perhaps seen better days! I have heard of children of good parentage being stolen and brought up by gipsies; and who knows but it may have been her fate?"

"Why, truly, if she had been filched from a noble family," said the Justice, with one of his grim smiles, "she could not have derived a haughtier bearing from her birth. In spite of Gregory, she seated herself in a chair with the air of a countess; and listened to his official report with the invulnerable nonchalance of one conscious of the privilege of the peerage. I can well fancy the dignified toss with which she threw Mr. Twigg's halfpenny into the duck-pond!"

"It looks like good blood, that's certain," said Sir Mark. "Too much spirit and action to have been a get by Gipsy out of Beggar, — grandsire Tinker — grandam Tramper — great-grandsire Ratcatcher, by Costermonger, Sand-man, Knife-grinder, and so forth. Of course you let her go for the sake of the breed."

"I DID let her go," returned the Justice, and here he paused, ——— "to the County Bridewell. She will beat hemp there for a month, as the statute directs."

This announcement caused a considerable sensation in his auditors; Sir

Mark gave involuntarily a significant whistle, and looked at his sister; who looked in turn at Grace; who looked down at the carpet.

Possibly the Magistrate interpreted their thoughts, for he immediately added that he had put it into the woman's own power to mitigate the sentence, by declaring her name and parish; both of which she contemptuously refused to communicate. Luckily the announcement of dinner interrupted any further conversation on the subject, and the mind of the Magistrate, like that of Justice Greedy, took a turn towards "the substantials."

As for the dinner, the bill of fare shall not be copied here in print, with a circumstantial description and criticism of all the made dishes, English or French; a custom as impertinent and annoying to the reader, as for a spectator at a theatre, jammed perhaps in a hot back-row of the pit, to have his eyes treated with the display of a stage banquet, and his ears with the popping of corks, — whereupon some malicious actor advances close to the lamps, and deliberately quaffs off his sparkling Champagne, iced of course, before our Tantalus's face. Suffice it that they dined; and then, after the ladies had retired, the Baronet and the Justice betook themselves steadily to drinking some claret, quite as good as La-Fitte or Chateau Margaux, though known in those days by some other name.

After a few glasses dedicated to the old standing Tory toasts of the time, Sir Mark filled a bumper, and getting on his legs, drank it off to the health of "The First Favourite for the maiden Stakes, — Grace Rivers;" the ceremony ending, according to an old-fashioned form of gallantry, by the glass being thrown over his shoulder, and dashed to atoms on the carpet. The Justice was compelled to follow the example, and as he really doted on his daughter, he acknowledged the compliment in a warmer tone of feeling than could have been expected from so rock-like a source. Unwonted moisture, — "tears such as angels weep," — bedimmed his falcon-like eyes, as he alluded to the virtues of his child, her frank, open disposition, and her affectionate devotion to himself; and for a moment the stern magistrate seemed devoted to no other laws than those of Nature. In conclusion, he filled his glass, to the health of "Ringwood Tyrrel, the Hope of the Hall," duly honouring the toast with a smash of glass as before.

Sir Mark was no orator: he made no attempt even to express his feelings by a speech; but he set up a joyful yoicks! which said quite as much — and seized the hand of the Justice and shook it heartily. He had been longing, in secret, to introduce the subject which lay uppermost in his heart; and this fortunate coupling of Grace with Ringwood, seemed to have broken the ice before him.

"Egad, neighbour," he said, "I 'm not much used to link my ideas together with dog-couples: but this toasting of your daughter and my son, has put a strange thought into my head. They are both of an age, both of a height, or thereabouts, and one is my heir, and the other your heiress, which is as fair a start as heart can wish. Suppose we were to lay an even pony or two, which will be married first? It would be a sporting thing; and if Grace comes in winner, I shall enjoy what I never enjoyed before — the loss of my money!"

"Why then done, for a hundred," said the Justice, who like country gentlemen in general was in some degree a sportsman; and the generous influence of the grape, moreover, predisposed him to enter into the whim.

"Twice!" cried Sir Mark.

"Done again!" replied the Justice.

"Three times?"

"Done! done! and done!" cried the Justice; "and there I must stop. And pray endorse your betting-book, 'strictly private,' with its entry of a certain gambling magistrate, who may have to-morrow to suspend a publi-

can's license, for allowing card playing, — Jonas Hanway for instance, and his whist club at the Rabbits."

"You may suspend me with the license," said Sir Mark, "when you can find any one to swear to their playing. But be easy about the betting book; we will be only upon honour."

"By the way, Sir Mark," said the Magistrate, "there is a third chance in the said matrimonial race, that we have both overlooked; the possibility of the parties coming to the church neck and neck at the same time!"

"A dead heat, by Jove!" exclaimed the Baronet, with well-feigned surprise, "and an old jockey and racer like me, to forget that such events may come off! Egad, neighbour, it would not be a bad way of hedging our money, eh?"

"Sir Mark, are you serious or in joke?" inquired the Magistrate.

"Either, at your pleasure," returned the Baronet, assuming however a gravity of tone and look that indicated he was in earnest. The moment had come to speak, but he was puzzled how to begin. He fidgeted in his chair, filled a glass of claret, and gulped it down, then gave a loud hem, and then three very bad coughs.

"It 's no use beating round the bush," he exclaimed at last, "when the game 's a-foot! I think, friend Rivers, our ideas and wishes are packing well together; and if you are as agreeable as I am to the match between Ringwood and Grace, all I can say is, I will back son against daughter with you, guinea for guinea; — and the dearest desire of my heart will be fulfilled to boot!"

"To be candid with you, Sir Mark," replied the Magistrate, "our bowls, biassed by old friendship, have been aimed at the same jack. Nothing indeed could afford me greater pride and pleasure than such an alliance. But as neither of the parties will be of age for a year or two, it seemed premature to ———"

"Zounds, man," interrupted the delighted Baronet, "you would not carry them into church, would you, without a little wooing beforehand? — Cupid wants training, as well as a colt, before you bring him to the post."

"Your remark is just," said the Magistrate: "for my own part I will take care to apprise Grace of our arrangement; and that henceforward she is to consider her affections engaged to your eldest son."

"No — hang it — no," exclaimed Sir Mark. "Do not come the magistrate over her neither! It will be time enough to use our authority, as fathers, when either of the young people has bolted out of the course. We must n't inoculate, but let them take it naturally. Love is a plant with long straggling roots, and the gardener who attempts to pot it — no, that's not it! — but it 's Kate's sentiment, and a very good one. And now boy, a bumper to a better match than was ever made on the turf. Tally — tally-ho — yoicks — yoicks — yoicks! — yo—icks!"

It is amusing to think that during the foregoing conversation of the two fathers, the unconscious Grace was sitting in the very next room,

"In maiden meditation, fancy free;"

thinking no more of courtship, marriage, and Ringwood, than of squibbs, crackers, and Guy Faux. Her lively spirits, her sweet temper, her natural good taste, and artless manners, had advanced her hourly in the opinion of Mrs. Hamilton; till at last, after a long kind look at her fair young face and graceful figure, that lady addressed her, in a tone of tenderness that thrilled through her very soul, as "her dear Miss Rivers."

"If I may beg a favour, my dear Madam," she replied, "pray oblige me by following the precedent of Sir Mark, and calling me only by my Christian name, — Grace, plain Grace."

"Well then, Grace, my dear Grace, did you ever place a hollow sea shell to your ear, and notice its perpetual sighing for the waters that ought to fill it?"

Grace signified that she had often done so on the coast.

"Come hither then, and tell me truly, did that young heart of yours never feel a craving, an indescribable craving, — as if there was some aching void in it that required filling up?"

The question suffused the face and neck of Grace with a deep blush; out it lasted only for an instant and vanished again ere she had pronounced the first word of an answer.

"Indeed, my dear Madam, I have felt it often — always at the sound of one word, and at the sight of one action;" and she concluded the sentence with a sigh.

"I know well what you mean," said Mrs. Hamilton, pressing her own hands to her bosom. "I feel it here at this moment — here, where I have felt it for years. Alone, or in society — in joy or in sorrow, in sickness, in health, here it is — the same intense yearning, everlastingly crying out in its agony, Give! give! — Tell me, my dear Grace, tell me, is it not even thus that your overcharged heart has pined for a mother?"

"Oh, God knows it," cried Grace, clasping her hands, and with difficulty suppressing the tears that were rushing upwards to her eyes; "my heart has throbbed almost to bursting, at the sight of caresses which I never — oh never knew! — never can know!"

"Even so, Grace," said Mrs. Hamilton, "have I been wrung with anguish, to see a mother embrace a daughter. It has been my fate to grieve through many lonely hours, but they would not have been either grievous or lonely, with some one — some such sweet girl as yourself — to love, and to love me. In imagination I have nursed this fair hope from bud to blossom, into even the full-blown flower. I have hung and trembled over her infancy — heard her lisp her first accents of love — watched the little sports of her childhood — and have been the confidant of the secrets of her girlhood. And was it not singular, Grace, that the daughter of my poor fond fancy should have had eyes the very colour of your own, and the same bonny brown hair?"

To this question Grace made no reply, but by putting both her hands into those of Mrs. Hamilton, who gently drew the graceful girl towards her, and imprinted a kiss on her forehead. "A Welshwoman," she continued, "would have sworn 't was some tie of blood between us, that attracted my love to you from the first moment of our meeting!"

"And mine to you, my dear madam," added Grace. "It is impossible I could remember you before you left the Hall, and yet that lady-like figure, and the benign smile, and the low gentle voice were so familiar to me, that it seemed like the fulfilment of a dream!"

"It *is* the fulfilment of a dream," said Mrs. Hamilton. "Our stars have spoken, and our hearts interpreted the oracle. Henceforth I will be your mother, and you shall be my daughter, the dear child of my soul, if not of my body, — shall it not be so, my own sweet Grace?"

"O for ever! and ever!" exclaimed Grace, throwing herself into the arms that opened to receive her. "And here begin the happiest hours of my life!"

"And here end the most wretched of mine," said the widow, caressing her adopted daughter with as much tenderness as belongs to many real mothers. "Oh Grace, the blessing you would have been to me at Glencosie! Some day you shall know all; but for this evening at least, the past shall not sadden the present!"

As the reader is aware, there had been with regard to Grace what the ingenious and elegant Mr. Robins would call "a bidding in two places:"

and at the very same moment that completed her maternal adoption in the drawing-room, the paternal shout and view-holla of Sir Mark ascended from the dining-room, in honour of his daughter-elect. It suggested no other idea, however, to the ladies, but that either he had broken cover with some never-sufficiently-to-be-recorded fox; or that he had taken abundance of wine, and would be the better for a never-sufficiently-to-be-announced cup of tea. Accordingly Mrs. Hamilton rang for the equipage, and made tea; and at about the sixth summons the gentlemen put in an appearance at her table, both certainly a little elevated, but by joy rather than the juice of the grape. Indeed the Baronet's head was so full of his favourite idea, that with an abstracted air he walked up to Grace, and gave her a hearty kiss, to the infinite astonishment of the young lady as well as his sister; and not a little to his own, when he recovered his recollection. The Justice alone, who was in the secret, and guessed what was passing in the mind of Sir Mark, conceived at once that the salute was anticipatory of the marriage ceremony, as was really the case; and his grim smile, at the sheepish look and awkward apologies of the Baronet, was the signal for a general laugh. All the parties were indeed in higher spirits than usual, and the evening passed away cheerfully; and before they separated, Sir Mark insisted on Grace singing one of her songs, in token that she had forgiven him for making her blush.

Grace immediately seated herself at a piano which in those days was reckoned a very grand one, though much such an instrument as a petty tradesman now selects at a broker's for a present to his daughter from boarding-school. After a short prelude, she sang to a plaintive Scotch air the following words, which, as a corollary to what had passed in the dining-room, made the two fathers exchange some very significant glances.

"My mother bids me love a lord,
My father does the same,
But then my heart has made a choice
Of one I will not name;
My parents' frowns reject the suit,
Their angry words reprove,
But oh, I cannot love the man
My mother bids me love!

They say his father is an Earl,
And talk of high degree,
Broad ribbons and a star for him,
A coronet for me. —
I care not for the eagle's nest,
But building with the dove,
I cannot, cannot love the man
My mother bids me love.

There is a secret voice that breathes
A fair and gentle mind,
There is a certain eye that tells
A heart that's warm and kind.
There is a vow so firm and fast,
And sealed in heav'n above,
That oh! I cannot love the man
My mother bids me love!

My father frets, my mother pines,
Their heads are silver-gray,
They cannot long possess a will
For me to disobey.

I would that I were in my grave,
This anguish to remove,
For oh! I cannot love the man
My mother bids me love."

"Egad, Grace," exclaimed the Baronet, "you have chosen a sorrowful ditty; Kate there is ready to cry. My own heart was at feather-weight a while ago, but now it seems carrying six pounds extra. I hope the words are none of your own making?"

"Raby was so kind as to copy them for me," answered Grace, "from some book of poems in your library."

"Ay, there it is," said Sir Mark, looking at the Justice with a slight gloom on his brow. "Catch Ringwood at copying out any thing—barring a 'recipe for making boots waterproof,' or a 'cure for the distemper.' I'll warrant, Grace, he never wrote out any thing for you in his life?"

"Nothing adapted to the voice," answered Grace, with an arch smile; "but he once obliged me with autograph directions how to make German paste for my singing-birds."

"And St. Kitts?" asked the baronet.

"Your nephew used formerly to copy poems for me," replied Grace, "But our tastes did not coincide; and he grew tired of extracting from Rochester and Sedley, whom I could not relish,—and he had as little liking on his own part for my old favourite Herrick."

"Come, Grace, come," said the magistrate, rising abruptly from his chair, "it is time to return to Hawksley,—or must I read the Riot Act and dissolve this meeting according to law? I have to look over the Hazel-Bridge evidence before I go to bed. Sir Mark, you will remember our bet for the Maiden Stakes?"

"Three hundred, even, the colt against the filly—and may neither of us win!" said the Baronet, with a knowing wink and a warm shake of the hand. "As for you, Grace, I see that you and Kate have cottoned, and I need not bid you come again soon to the Hall!"

"Miss Rivers has been so kind as to promise to come often," said Mrs. Hamilton. "I am to have the happiness of her society at least once a week."

"God bless you then, Grace," said Sir Mark, "and send you ability to keep your word. The boys will be home soon, and then I shall kiss and court you by proxy—but that's only a joke."

Thus they parted, and Mrs. Hamilton retired to her room, and the Baronet to his bed, to dream of weddings and rings and white favours, as if bride-cake had been placed under his pillow.

"Well, Tibbie," said the lady, as the Scotchwoman helped her to undress, "how has all fared with you the night?"

"Od, Mem," replied Tibbie, "it's just extraordinar, my head 's rinnin round like a peery! I 'm thinking the justice-wark will be cannily dune the morn's morn, when the Provost and Sir Mark Tirl hae been at their high jinks. As fac 's death, Mem, for I keekit in at the door, I saw the Provost casting the wine-glasses owre his shouther to play smash upon the flure!"

"An old English custom, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "by way of doing honour to a health. Formerly it was common for gentlemen to cast their cravats of Mechlin lace, or their perukes, on the fire-grate, according to the example of the proposer of the toast."

"Macklin crawvats, and perukes! Gude safe 's!" exclaimed Tibbie, with an appropriate elevation of her eyes and hands. "My certie, it 's no wonder thae English hae siccan a Nawtional Debt, as they ca 't! Douce Dawvid Nicol,—and he 's the cashier o' the Dundee Bank,—did never the like o' that!"

"But the kitchen, Tibbie," inquired the mistress, "how came ye on with the strange servants!"

"By my troth, Mem," said Tibbie, "they were camsteary eneuch. Yon prejink flunkies wha cam wi' the Provost, were owre upsettin to drink yill, but chappit on the butler, to bring ben the port wine and the sherry wine as affhand as in a change-house, where they were gaun to pay the lawin'. But I 'm thinking I gied them a screed o' flyting, instead o' yon fule body Deborah. 'Drink awa', Sirs,' says I, 'drink awa', ye're a' coming to pigs and whistles!' But I might have spared my breath to cool my parritch! Here 's t' ye, Tibbie, cries ane, and here 's t' ye, Tibbie, cries anither, and here 's t' ye, Tibbie, cries yon Jerry, and send ye gude yill and gude custom at the Pig and Whistle!"

"Never fash yoursel, Tibbie," said the Mistress, "wi' the likes — you 're no at Glencosie."

"Ou, Mem," said the Scotchwoman, "it 'maist gars me greet to see the dinging down o' the glass and the cheeny, and the siller-spunes, wi' their pliskies. — Div ye no think, Mem, it would be a saving o' siller to write north for a hantle o' wooden quaichs and bickers and horn spunes, for nae doot they 'll be for emitatin their betters, and casting their drinkin-cups owre the shouther?"

"It 's a serious question, Tibbie, and I must sleep upon it," replied Mrs. Hamilton; and with this quietus she dismissed the handmaid to her own pillow, to dream, if one may guess at her night-visions, of a mad bull in a china-shop.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"And if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it!"

DOGBERRY.

——— "He shall be endured —
What goodman boy? I say he shall. Go to.
Am I the master here or you? Go to."

OLD CAPULET.

"Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting,
Makes my flesh tremble with their different greeting
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall."

TYBALT.

"Between us two let there be peace; both joining
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assign'd us,
That cruel serpent."

PARADISE LOST.

HILARY term ended at last, to the great delight of Squire Ned, who looked upon Ringwood as his adopted son; a relationship originating in sporting, like that of Cotton, the angler, with "his Father Walton."

He acceded, therefore, with great glee, to a proposition from Sir Mark, that they should ride together on horseback as far as the first stage, to meet and welcome the young Collegians; while Dick the huntsman, and the whipper-in, should follow with led horses, for the use of the students.

"A clever little nag that," said the Squire, after a long-eyed look at a brown gelding, that Dick was leading, "knows how to go — capital action."

"A picture, is n't he?" said the Baronet. "I bought him last week, by way of a surprise to Ringwood. He was bred by old Toby Sparks, at

Hollington; by Jiggumbob, out of Tolderol, by Diddledumkins, Cockalorum, and so forth."

"An odd fish old Toby," said the Squire, "always gives 'em queer names — can jump a bit no doubt?"

"He jumps like a flea," said Dick, "and as for galloping, he can go from anywhere to everywhere in forty minutes, — and back again."

"Glad of it," said Ned, "just the thing for Ringwood — all ready eh!" here he looked at his watch, "Go!"

And away they trotted, the Squire keeping his horse a little in the rear of the Baronet's, a position which enabled him to divide his conversation between Sir Mark and the huntsman, who now and then exchanged a sentence with the whipper-in, as he followed with two led hacks; and in this order they took to the road. Occasionally, at a signal from the Squire, they slackened or increased their speed; and so well did he time the pace, that they arrived at the Green Dragon at * * * * just as the Oxford coach had stopped to change horses.

"Well, my boys, welcome home again," said the Baronet, shaking them successively by the hand; while the Squire, after a nod a-piece, gave Ringwood an affectionate slap on the back that would have corrected a smaller child.

"Been tooling the tits, eh?" he said; "very pretty team — near wheeler lame behind" — he continued, as he critically watched each horse as it went smoking and shaking its tail into the stable-yard. "Glad to see you, Ringwood," here another slap. "Old Hilary has n't rubbed off any of your bloom."

The eye of the father made a similar remark that Ringwood looked rather more florid than usual; while the complexion of Raby was somewhat paler than common, — the natural results of too much port and claret, and an excess of Greek and Latin. As for St. Kitts, his cheeks wore the old brown — a tinge somewhat resembling that of an undoubted "portrait by Rembrandt" in a picture-dealer's window. At the same time, the three faces were as different in expression as in colour, — the Creole's implied indifference; that of Raby beamed with the quiet enjoyment of a mind at peace with itself, somewhat heightened by the pleasure of meeting his father; but, in spite of its healthy hue, the countenance of Ringwood was saddened by a cast of anxiety and gloom; hinting, too probably, that he looked back on time and money equally misspent at college. His quick eye, however, detected at a glance the new acquisition to the stable, and every thought of self-reproach for the follies or vices of the heir of Tylney was lost in the consideration of the many good points about the offspring of Jiggumbob and Tolderol. From this reverie he was roused by the voice of his father.

"Well, how do you think he will carry you — for he is all your own, my boy, from the bridle to the crupper?"

"If he 's old Sparks's colt, Sir, he 's the very one I 've long set my heart upon," answered Ringwood. "But if he 's meant as a college-prize, Sir, he belongs more to St. Kitts than to me; and to Raby more than either."

"Raby be d—d," the Squire was about to say, but he suppressed the words, and contented himself with tacitly expressing his opinion, by snatching the bridle of the horse in question and turning him round with his head to Ringwood and his tail to Raby.

"For my part," said the Creole, "I disclaim any idea of rivalry in our studies — and am pained to think my cousin has suggested any inquiry as to our relative progress at Oxford."

"Sink the letter then," said Ringwood, in an under tone, at the same time shifting to the off-side of the horse, and affecting to examine his fore feet.

"You forget — I am upon honour," replied the Creole, in the same tone, and stooping into the same position.

"Why then — take care of yourselves!" cried Ringwood, springing into

the saddle, and striking the spurs into the horse with such suddenness, that St. Kitts only escaped, by a desperate spring backwards, being thrown down and trampled under foot.

"Confound the fellow — he will start the mail," cried Sir Mark, catching the head of one of the leaders, who seemed inclined to improve upon the then rate of travelling, by running away with the coach. However Ringwood continued to spur desperately on, as if, Byron-like, he was under some excitement that was to be worked off by hard galloping; in fact when he returned, he was covered with dust, and the panting steed was in a lather of sweat and foam. "He is not a roarer that 's certain," he said, as he dismounted and threw the bridle to the whipper-in.

"Who the devil said he was!" cried Sir Mark. "Dick, see him thoroughly rubbed down, — and have him well clothed. Let them all have a good feed of corn — and mind, Dick, see with your own eyes that the Green Dragon does not devour it for them. And now let 's in-doors — for two legs must have a bait as well as four."

As they went in, Raby twitched his brother by the sleeve, and caused him to remain a little behind.

"For God's sake, and for your own sake, Ringwood," he said, "do n't show this spleen before our father. St. Kitts will only play the amiable, and the comparison will be to your disadvantage."

"Right," said Ringwood, "and thank ye for the hint: he 's sure to run cunning."

In pursuance of this line of policy, Ringwood discarded his reserve, and laughed and chatted as if determined to overcrow the Creole even in mirth and good humour. He drew humorous pictures of college-comforts, of freshmen, and tuft-hunters, of bed-makers, beadles, and barbers; and then he gave an Egan-like description of a pugilistic encounter between a gownsman and a bargeman, that made the squire roar with laughter. He next entered into an animated account of a boat-race, in which he had rowed among the winners; and then of a cock-fight; and then of a coursing-meeting, well attended by Oxonians; to the evident delight of his father.

After such stirring subjects, the Creole's description of an examination, and the terrors and boggling of the unprepared; and of a college-inquisition, and the speech of a Proctor, — fell dead on the ear; the organ of Ringwood excepted, for he suspected, and perhaps rightly, that the narrative contained some covert reference, both retrospectively and prospectively, to his own career at college. At any rate he made the application to himself, and secretly resolved to be avenged at the first opportunity: he indulged his mood in the mean time, by throwing a threatening glance occasionally at the Creole, which the latter received with a calm smile, relying on his own superior powers of retaliation; even as the malignant viper, which will bask lazily in your very path, conscious of his own cruel fangs, and daring your foot, whilst the unarmed snake startles away, more fearing than feared, into the nearest thicket.

At last he struck, and with deadly effect. He well knew how to "heap coals on the head of his enemy," by dealing with him to all appearance generously, and even kindly, where less politic natures would avow their animosity by angry looks and bitter speech. He again took part in the conversation, and choosing Ringwood for his theme repeated in glowing terms the praises he had heard lavished at Oxford on his intrepid riding; his superior shooting, which had made him the crack shot of the Pigeon Club; his exquisite driving, four-in-hand, on the box of the long coaches; and he even recorded certain Bacchanalian feats, at which his subject had been the hero; adding however a deprecatory clause, that such irregularities could scarcely be at all times avoided by a young man at the University, but at the expense

of personal ridicule and insult, and that he had felt compelled himself to join occasionally in such orgies.

The Baronet's face glowed with pride during the recital, and the Squire's one eye glistened with absolute delight: but Ringwood, for the first time in his life, heard with pain and disgust an acknowledgement of his superior skill, ardour, and success in all the various branches of field sports. Neither did the younger brother listen with much pleasure to the next topic which the Creole thought proper to introduce; although he studiously quoted the very high eulogiums which had been pronounced on Raby's acquirements, in languages and classical literature. The extreme contrast between the reputation of the two brothers, thus artfully placed in juxtaposition, suggested an inference too obvious to escape the mind of the Baronet; who consequently shrank from any allusion or inquiry to scholarship — being sorrowfully persuaded that his favourite son and heir had made neither step nor stride towards any degrees except the geographical.

The unfortunate victim, whose feelings were really to be pitied, actually writhed in soul, under the infliction. As he dearly loved his father, he could not witness the gloom which overcast his fine jovial countenance without an exquisite pang of self-reproach; and bitterly he execrated the folly that had given his cousin the opportunity of such a triumph.

"The hell-hound!" he said to himself, "he might as well have put the letter into my father's hands, before all present; but cunning as he is in running on his foil, and doubling, he shall find I can pick it out."

In the mean time his feelings were somewhat soothed by receiving, under the table, the secret pressure of a kindly hand, which he knew to be Raby's, who took this method of showing that he appreciated and sympathized with his situation. It was the act of a friend in need, and Ringwood acknowledged its value at that moment by a grip so strenuous, that the blood rushed up into Raby's cheeks, who with difficulty suppressed an exclamation. The two brothers had indeed, in some degree, forgotten their own differences, and were united more than formerly as mutual allies against St. Kitts, who by some vague, indefinable instinct, they had begun to regard in the light of a common enemy.

"Here's good luck to the new nag," said Squire Ned, with a nod to Ringwood, preparatory to a long pull and a strong pull at a tankard of xx ale, for which the Green Dragon was justly famous. "A roarer eh? — sounder in wind than I am! — can't drink a pint without fetching breath." "And here's to you, boy, yourself," he added, with a renewed draught in honour of Ringwood: — "nothing but a good fellow — upright and downright — no skulker — no flincher — no snake in the grass!"

With the last of his negatives, the Squire threw such a significant meaning into his one gray eye, and fixed it so pointedly on the Creole, that the latter immediately perceived that one of the party, at least, had detected the latent origin of his insidious panegyrics. Unlike the Baronet, who set great store by an University education — honest Ned attached no earthly value to human learning, beyond reading and writing; and therefore he had listened to the praises of Ringwood as a sportsman, with an unalloyed rapture, only equalled in degree by the utter apathy with which he had heard the encomiums on Raby's classical attainments. It was not till he noticed Sir Mark's depression, that he suspected the sting which, like Cleopatra's asp, had been treacherously introduced, under a covering of fruit and flowers. His unbounded love and admiration of Ringwood led him naturally to the conclusion, that jealousy, and a desire of supplanting him, were the private motives of the West Indian; or, as he forcibly illustrated it by a mental comparison, Sir Mark had a young cuckoo in his nest, that would eject his own brood. The abrupt trial of the new nag, and the narrow escape of St. Kitts, were no longer a mystery; and could human eye have

searched the Squire's inward heart, it would probably have detected a lurking wish, that the horse had tried the temper of his shoes on the skull and brains which had conceived such a device against "the Heir and Hope of the Hall."

Under these circumstances, each person of the party having some particular cause of discontent with another, it may easily be conceived, that the general hilarity fell far short of the Baronet's anticipations. On leaving the inn, Ringwood indeed could not help mechanically admiring the high spirit and fine action of the beautiful animal that was led towards him; and for a moment, he looked like Shakspeare's Young Harry, as if about to "witch the world with noble horsemanship;" but this elasticity of body and spirit vanished as he alighted in the saddle, and the Creole, like any body's Old Harry, smiled a sardonic smile, to witness the rankling of the well-directed shaft. The Squire was infected by his favourite's gloom; — Sir Mark had a grievance of his own; and even the serene mind of Raby was darkened by the shadows of clouds which hung over other heads.

For some miles the whole company rode almost in silence; at last, an abrupt question from the Baronet revived the old feud.

"Ringwood, — what name do you think of giving to your new nag, — for luckily, Old Sparks hadn't christened him with any of his ridiculous rumfoozles, or rumtyiddities?"

"As the Squire names all his horses and dogs to begin with A," replied Ringwood, "I make a rule that all mine shall start with B. I think of calling him Brown Bastard."

The last two words, and the look, which put them as it were *in italics*, were not lost on the Creole. His eyes literally flashed fire, and as he turned his horse towards Ringwood's, his hand made an involuntary movement upward with his riding-whip, but luckily the motion was too slight to excite notice.

"Bastard again," he muttered between his teeth, "do you wish to excite me to show, Sir, how I can resent an insult?"

"Name your own horses as you please, Sir," returned Ringwood, in the same under-tone, — his hand mechanically gliding from the butt-end to the top of his whip, "and do not dare to interfere with mine."

"Bastard, eh? — proper name enough for a colt," said the Squire, unceremoniously thrusting his hack between the enraged cousins. "Don't suppose Jiggumbob and Tolderol were ever married, — banns or license!"

"This is my quarrel, Sir, and I will not brook meddling," said St. Kitts to the Squire, with the same guarded tone; but in spite of this caution, and the prudent manœuvres of Raby, who endeavoured to divert the attention of his father, the Baronet's quick ears had already apprised him that there was a quarrel on foot, though he had not discovered its drift.

He immediately pushed on a little a-head, where he wheeled his horse round, and halting in the middle of the road, with a position and manner of great dignity, he addressed them as they came up three abreast.

"How is this, lads? — how is this? — snarling and wrangling between whelps of the same blood, — I had almost said the same litter? Is this your respect for yourselves, for each other, for me? Do you want to hunt these gray hairs," (here he took off his hat,) "to earth with shame and sorrow?"

"Hark to him! hark!" shouted Ned, at the same time doffing his own hat in sign of reverence; "hark to the old one!"

"Thank ye, Squire, for the halloo!" said the Baronet, "and be so kind as to lead the field at a foot-pace towards the Hall, whilst Raby remains with me."

In obedience to this command, they all passed on except the younger son, who reined up beside his father; and as soon as the others were out of sight, Sir Mark commenced his examination.

"Raby, you know I hate babbling. Put me up at once to the origin of this fall-out between your brother and St. Kitts, for I winded a quarrel better than a hundred yards back."

"I believe, Sir," answered Raby, "it may all be traced to a letter which my cousin has at this moment in his pocket. It is from Jenkins the tutor to yourself; and as Jenkins is a pedant, and Ringwood is naturally the reverse, I declined to be the bearer of an epistle which probably reflected on my brother. Ringwood refused the letter from the same suspicion, and I believe he feels hurt that St. Kitts undertook to deliver it.

"A likely cast, Raby," said the Baronet, "and my own observation owns to the scent. — Ride up, man, ride up, and I will soon see if it holds good."

In a few minutes they rejoined the others, and Sir Mark rode up to the Creole and asked for the letter.

"I have had a severe struggle, Sir," said the latter, "between friendship and conscience, whether to suppress or deliver this unlucky paper, guessing the contents to be unpleasant to Ringwood, and I believe friendship would have got the better, — but Raby's mention of it leaves me no alternative." So saying he delivered the letter to the Baronet, who thrust it unopened into his pocket.

"You hear that, Ringwood," he said, addressing his eldest son. — "Your cousin intended to hush it up. Take the kindness, and shake hands, boys, shake hands at once. — You must pack better together, or it will break my heart. I fancied I could cover you all with a sheet."

"For my own part," said St. Kitts, "I am perfectly ready to forgive and forget any personal cause of offence, — and which possibly originated in my own misapprehension. Will my cousin not say the same, now I have spared him the humiliation of making the first advances?"

But Ringwood remained silent. The Squire, however, again rode in between, and endeavoured to join their hands, almost pulling the West Indian from his saddle in the attempt.

"Still mute!" exclaimed the Baronet, rising in wrath. "Do n't forget, Ringwood — my temper is spicy — and if I once get in a passion — Zounds, Sir, shake hands at once, or I will dismount you, I will, by Jove!"

"At your command, Sir, I must," answered Ringwood, reluctantly extending his hand towards his cousin, while a sudden rush of blood to his face showed that a slight smile of triumph in the Creole had not escaped his notice. "It is your turn to-day," he muttered, "it will be mine to-morrow."

"That 's well, my boys," said Sir Mark, his face beaming with pleasure at what he deemed the reconciliation. "As for this," he said, taking out the letter, and casting it over the little bridge they were crossing, "the minnows may read it, for me. What is past is past, and I will not turn the heel. So if any one here has neglected his duty, let him go on Sunday to church and hark to Dr. Cobb, and when it comes to "We have left undone those things we ought to have done, and we have done those things we ought not to have done," and so forth, let him say Amen, with all his heart, and resolve to take up and mend for the future."

The lecture had its due effect on the party for whose benefit it was intended: for Ringwood, naturally well-disposed but thoughtless, from the very first moment that he witnessed the disappointment and vexation of his father, had been framing resolutions to apply himself more diligently to his College studies. He could not forget, however, that the wound in his parent's feelings had been wantonly irritated and probed by the Creole; whom he regarded therefore with unmitigated hostility. The latter, on the contrary, assumed a cheerful air, and affected to be overjoyed at the adjustment of their difference.

"St. Kitts," said the Baronet, "you are a generous fellow. You do not

sit frowning on your horse as sulky as a badger, or bristle up and keep yourself to yourself like a hedgehog."

"He can play the hypocrite better than I can," Ringwood was about to answer; but he suppressed the speech, and contented himself with slackening his pace and letting his horse trot alongside his brother's.

"Thank ye for nothing, Raby," he said so low as not to be overheard. "You had an opportunity just now of backing me with my father; and see what comes of it — Gip has the call."

"Indeed you wrong me," replied Raby, "I said merely that old Jenkins was a pedant and that you were none,— and that St. Kitts had undertaken to deliver his letter, after you and I had declined."

"Out of infernal malice," said Ringwood, "and to injure me with my father — you might have pitched in that. When I want a friend, give me an out-and-outer! Such a friend as I have been to you. Did n't I back you at seven to four for the prize poem — and never hedged?

"But, my dear Ringwood ———"

"Who told you how to lay your money at the running-match at Bullington? Who put you up to the trick at the trotting-match that Scamp was meant to win, and Fairplay was *not?* Who told you of the snug little prize-fight at Headington? Who took you to Mother Boult's?"

"My dear Ringwood, I could retort. Who rendered into Latin for you the twentieth Spectator? Who paid your tavern bill at Pinkie's? Who stood your friend with the Proctor in the affair of Widow Wakeman? But this is child's play. Your own temper is in fault. I warned you not to let your quarrel break out before your father?"

"I know you did," said Ringwood, rather softened, "and if I had taken your advice, and had n't let loose, I should be now in a better place. But I can't stand nibbling at a hindleg; I must go at the head at once. I can't help it — it 's in my nature: and I hate St. Kitts as Whop hates vermin."

"There again," said Raby, "you are always in extremes. Is it not possible to dislike St. Kitts without hating him, and wanting to nail him up against the vermin on the end of the old barn?"

"Faith, he would not cut a bad figure among the polecats, and stoats, and weazels," said Ringwood, smiling bitterly at the conceit. "He can run you down, bite viciously, and hang on at your nape, as well as any of 'em! He would be a jewel of a specimen to rot and stink among the skeletons of Dick's museum!"

Their conversation was here interrupted by the halt of the advance; and Sir Mark, riding back to his two sons, desired them to take especial care of the brown woman who was coming along the road, for that Mr. Twigg said she was a witch, and even Justice Rivers was quite at fault about her. As she walked towards them slowly, they had leisure to remark her appearance. She was dressed in faded mourning, rather brown than black, through length of wear or exposure to weather; the weeds of a decayed widow, one of those sable beings that seem, like the ravens, to depend on a special Providence for their sustenance, they have apparently so little earthly means of their own. Her dress, however, though coarse and ill-made, could not conceal the symmetry of a shape that had belonged to that "order of fine forms" which is peculiar to the half-caste females of the West Indies. She had the taper waist, the full round limbs, and the graceful easy carriage. Moreover she had the abundant black hair, curling naturally into ringlets, too inflexible to uncoil themselves at every breath of heat or moisture; and her eyes were of as dark a hue, black and bright as cannel-coal, and equally apt to emit fire and flame.

As soon as she came near enough, the Squire, who rode a little a-head, jumped off his horse, and planted himself before her, holding out what remained of his right hand.

"Here," he said, "sixpen'north of fortune telling. Won't bilk you—cross with silver and all that!"

"The wise man makes his own fortune," said the woman, with great dignity, "and he himself best knows its aspect."

"High-ropes, eh?" said the Squire, somewhat abashed by this rebuff. "Won't look at my palm — suppose the two off-fingers made a difference. No matter — welcome to the tizzy."

"Give it to your slaves," exclaimed the woman, with an imperious wave of the arm, and a look of scorn that implied as much contempt for his silver as for Twigg's copper.

"Egad, boys," said Sir Mark, "I begin to think the Justice is right, and that she comes of good blood. — She reminds me wonderfully of Mrs. What's-her-Name, in the character of Cleopatra. I'll warrant her father was at the very least the King of the Gipsies!"

"There is no more Gipsy-blood in my veins, than in that young gentleman's," returned the woman, pointing her finger at the Creole; and gazing so earnestly on his face, that for some minutes she seemed unconscious of any other presence. Her mind evidently turned inward, and she had the abstracted look of a person revolving the past or the future with intense interest. At last she spoke. "Although no gipsy, I have some skill in augury, and if you will favour me, young gentleman, with your hand?" ——

"Try her, St. Kitts, try her," exclaimed Sir Mark, "now we have found her, let us give a good account of her; let her open, man, and we shall soon see if she gives tongue to the right tune." Here he drew St. Kitts aside, adding, in a lower tone, "let her cross your hand with a crown though, for she is not one of the common sort."

In obedience to this direction, St. Kitts gave her a crown, which she immediately transferred to the huntsman, with the air of one accustomed to bestow such largess; making Dick stare with as much amazement, as if he had seen with his own eyes a hare turning into a witch. He lifted his hand as if to touch his hat, but checked his arm midway, — and then sat twirling the coin between his finger and thumb, with a ludicrous look of appeal towards his master; partly in doubt whether he ought to accept it from a distressed gentlewoman, and partly in fear that the money was from the Devil's mint, and would burn a hole in his pocket.

"Pouch it, Dick; pouch it!" said Sir Mark, in an aside. "If you don't fancy her herself, you can drink it to the health of the Lancashire Witches, or any others you like."

Accordingly Dick pocketed the piece, whilst St. Kitts extended his hand to the fortune-teller, who grasped it between her own, and even kissed it, muttering inaudibly, and at the same time trembling so that it was visible to the eye, as if feeling, or affecting to feel, the prophetical agitation of the ancient sibyls.

"There is a black cloud," she said, "over your star, — but there is a bright sun in store. Remember me. The past you do not remember — the present you do not understand — the future you cannot foresee. But I know it all. Remember me. You have but one present trouble; and it concerns a gold ring for a lady's finger."

"Hark to Gipsy!" shouted the Baronet; "the old story, by Jove! To her! St. Kitts! — to her, — to her again! What odds she do n't name the lady!"

"I hope, Sir," said St. Kitts, "you are already satisfied of her abilities as a Pythoness. So far from thinking of marriage, I give you my honour I am not even an hour gone in courtship. But she is like all her tribe; a gold ring and a bride-cake are their staple commodities."

"Not so fast, young man," said the fortune-teller. "There are two ends to a knot, and two interpretations to an oracle. Remember me. Some

lovers may long to see the third finger of their lady's left hand in a golden circle, — and some sons may wish that their mothers had worn the same emblem. Remember me."

"The devil remember you!" said the Creole, who almost imagined that the evil one had thrown this augury in his path, — and striking the spurs into his steed, he galloped some hundred yards a-head as if to escape the comments of his companions. The woman silently followed his course with her eyes, till he disappeared behind a turn of the road, and then, without deigning to notice any of the questions that were put to her, resumed her walk in the opposite direction.

"Egad, it looks like witchcraft though!" exclaimed the Baronet: "she knew where to have him, — and bolted him like a rabbit! Not that I'm fond of ferreting into futurity: it damps a man's courage, to see his dangers and misfortunes so long beforehand: and is apt to make him boggle and stick in the middle, when a gallant charge would have carried him through."

"It was nothing but chance, father," said Raby. "What Shakespeare calls a random bolt. I have often had my fortune told, — for the Gipsies are an interesting race, and what I had read of them excited my curiosity to know more of them. These fortune-tellers are excellent physiognomists, — you saw how narrowly she watched the looks of St. Kitts — for they know in an instant, by your face, when they have touched on the right string. Then again they are very voluble, and have always some recurring phrase, like that 'Remember me,' which gives them time for invention. Besides it is a very common thing for them ——"

"D —— d if I won't," ejaculated the Squire, rousing suddenly from a fit of meditation —— "knows, may be, who 's to win the Darby!"

In compliance with this suggestion he immediately turned his horse round and rode after the Sibyl, determined to ask her a few questions for the benefit of his betting-book, while the rest of the party pulled up and waited to see the issue of the conference. The woman had gained the brow of a gentle hill before she was overtaken, and as she stood in relief against the sky they could see every motion. By the action of her hands and arms it was evident she was talking with great vehemence, and the Squire, who had dismounted, by his gestures was equally importunate, till at last, as she turned to go, they saw him catch hold of her cloak, as if to detain her by force. Her right arm immediately rose at full stretch above her head, and a flash came from the hand in the sun-shine like the glancing of steel. The blow however did not descend: the garment was released, the woman disappeared instantly behind the brow of the hill: — and the Squire, remounting his horse, came slowly back to rejoin his companions.

"There you come, Squire," cried Sir Mark, "with your head drooping and your tail down, like a greyhound that has lost his hare!"

"Confound her," said Ned, with a smart slap of his riding-whip on his boot. — "Wants a cage and a keeper — worse than ten tiger-cats or cata-mountains — looks scratches, and talks bites. Never met an uglier customer — never — never — never!"

"We thought we saw the gleam of a knife," remarked Ringwood.

"Ay, boy," said the Squire — "Long blade — sharp point — fit to kill a porker. Did its share of work, may be, at Hazel Bridge — no saying. A regular vicious jade — would turn a man to clod and sticking, in the snap of a flint."

"You should have tried her with gold," said Raby; "these gipsies well know how to raise their market. They reject copper in the hope of silver; and refuse silver in expectation of gold."

"Had gold on the hook, man," replied the Squire, "but no go. — Wouldn't rise at a guinea. Very odd, — won't take money — don't patter slang — long knife — and no fork to it!"

"I am afraid," said the Baronet, with a serious shake of his head, "she has learned the trick of stabbing in the county jail. The justice sent her there for a month to beat hemp."

"Some day, hemp will beat *her*," said Ned, with a nod and wink.

"I cannot say that I like that hemp-beating," said Sir Mark; "it only teaches them how to hammer people's heads. I remember once looking in at them at work, and a hang-dog set they were, and one rogue in particular. There, said he, at every thump of his mallet, that 's for So-and-so 's rascally old brains. And so he went on with a bang a-piece for the whole Bench. But magistrates are as fond of their prisons as fox-hunters of their kennels; only they can never have their pack numerous enough of all sorts and sizes, whereas a master of hounds likes 'em well-bred and select."

"Good," said the Squire.

"Besides," continued the Baronet, "the dogs get a good education, and learn how to behave and make themselves useful when they are let out; which is far from the case with human prisoners."

"True as Gospel," said Ned.

"It is quite an idea of my own," Sir Mark went on, "but it would be better for the nation if the visiting magistrates would visit a well-managed kennel, by way of example, before they inspect their jails."

"Ay," said the squire — "regular meals — nothing but water — no riot — no giving tongue, that is, cursing and swearing — long whip — plenty of work — tree and halter for them that won't mend."

"The Justice laughs at my notion," said the Baronet, "but between ourselves, if anything should happen to disable Dick, and a vacancy occurs, I'll try my interest in the county to get him made Master of the House of Correction."

They now overtook the Creole, who had recovered his composure, and sobered his pace to a walk, in order to allow the others to come up. As they advanced, he purposely drew towards the side of the road which would place him next to Ringwood, in order to maintain the credit he had obtained for generosity and forbearance.

"I am afraid I have appeared very foolish," he said, "but there are certain subjects which have a peculiar sting."

"A sting indeed," said Sir Mark. "I never saw a start off but once, and that was on Sorrel, when the boys had been stirring up the old wasp's nest in the lane. I verily believe he went through all the capers of the College Hornpipe. But spur on, boys, spur on, I see the Twiggs' carriage yonder turning off for the Hall."

The Ex-Sheriff's equipage was indeed entering the avenue, but at a very unusual pace; for the coachman had flogged his horses into a gallop, a sure sign, in the Baronet's opinion, that the lady was not of the party. Having the advantage of a good start, the vehicle arrived at its destination some ten minutes before the horsemen; but to the surprise of Sir Mark, he saw from afar the two ladies run up the steps, and dart into the house like a couple of scared rabbits bobbing into a burrow. Suspecting some unusual occurrence, he pushed on at speed, and on entering the Hall the first person he encountered was old Deborah, panting along with a glass of cold water, her breath just sufficing to inform her master that "Mrs. Twigg — was in — a — fit!"

Fits by the way are strange things. Like the hen-bird which has the faculty of retaining her eggs till an appropriate nest is built and ready for its reception, so a lady seems to have the power of bottling up her hysterics till there is help at hand, with a chance of hartshorn and water, and every fitting accompaniment. As Major Oakley says, in the Jealous Wife, "Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you were not by? Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet?"

Accordingly Mrs. Twigg had postponed her swoon while in the carriage, or on the steps, or the stairs, but the moment she found herself in the drawing-room, with a comfortable elbow-chair under her, she quietly closed her eyes, dropped her arms, and "went off like a lamb."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levell'd only at me? Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles and conflagration? Here it is—an incendiary letter dropped at my door.

* * * *

I'm so frightened I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go. Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder. We shall all be burnt in our beds. We shall all be burnt in our beds!"

CROAKER.

"I have met with so many axidents, surprisals, and terrifications, that I am in a perfect fantigo, and believe I shall never be my own self again."

WIN. JENKINS.

JUST as the Baronet entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Twigg began to give signs of returning animation. Her snub nose, almost excoriated by smelling salts, worked with convulsive twitchings; and as her daughter fanned her, she gave at every puff of air a gasp like a gudgeon; at last she opened her eyes, and sat staring about her like the Lady in Comus, in the Enchanted Chair.

"Upon my honour, Sir Mark," said Twigg, "I am really ashamed of this rumpus. It 's so ridiculous having the family things in a strange house. Curse it, Madam, if you must faint, I wish you 'd contrive to do it at home!"

"Really, Pa', you 're rather unfeeling," lisped Miss Twigg. "When insensibility affects the nerves, we can't always faint where we like."

"That 's all gammon," said Twigg, in the very spirit of Major Oakley. "You take precious good care never to flop down in a kennel; and catch you swooning away into a fish pond, or having a kicking fit in the fender. But, says you, that would spoil one's clothes."

"It was the cruel galloping," whined the lady, her senses returning, as well as everything else, except her colour, which had never flown.

"And high time to gallop, Madam," answered Twigg, "when people have a volcano under their feet! Things are come to a crisis. Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet! — Mrs. Hamilton, Madam, — we live in very awful times, very awful indeed!"

"My dear fellow, hold hard," said the Baronet, laying his hand on Twigg's arm, and whispering into his ear, "You will have her into fits again if you do n't hold hard, for she 's amiss and out of heart."

"Let her faint," said Twigg, elevating his voice to the proper pitch for a forum. "The hour is come when people must not think of females and fits. The very thing my old friend Jack Dawe said in the Common Council is coming to pass. A rise-up of servants against masters, and servants against mistresses — of people with nothing, against people of property. There 's been a dead set at us ever since we came to Hollington."

"To be sure," said Sir Mark, "I 'm afraid some of our democrats and demagogues, with their speeches and so forth, have done us no good in our public principles. There is a set of people in the parish I know, that are all for liberty and equality."

"Read this, Sir Mark," exclaimed Twigg, drawing a letter out of his pocket. "If any body wants conviction, let them read this, and lay their

hands on their hearts, and then say, Ar' n't these revolutionary levelling times, or ar' n't they not? Let them just read this," he continued, striking the letter with his fore-finger, but still holding the paper so that its perusal should not interrupt his oration, "Here 's proof, ocular proof! The reign of anarchy, and the reign of terror, and all sorts of reigns, is set in; and social order, and all that sort of thing, is to be upset, and subverted, and topsyturvied. Here am I -- threatened with fire, and fury, and brimstone. And why? I ask why? — Why, says you, because I am a man of property!"

"Very shocking times, indeed," said Sir Mark, ineffectually holding out his hand for the letter.

"It 's true, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, every word and syllable of it," said Mrs. Twigg, with a shake of the head, very like Lord Burleigh's in the Critic.

"What 's to become of Church and State?" continued Twigg, evidently fancying himself on his legs before the Common Council. "What 's to become of the Bible and Crown? What 's to become of us all, when the pillars of the constitution is pulled down, and the pinnacles of national prosperity, and all that is ancient, all that is old, and all that is venerable, is trod under foot by tag-rag-and-bobtail?"

"If the paper contains any such plot," said Sir Mark, again attempting to take it, "I should say it ought to be forwarded to the Secretary of State."

"That 's what I say," said Mrs. Twigg. "Nothing but a troop of Life Guards can keep us safe in our shoes. I am glad we came here for advice."

"All I ask," continued Twigg, "is one question, and that is this.—How are people of property to act, when thus attacked in retail, — I mean to say detail? Here am I — worth we 'll say, a hundred thousand pounds, -- here I am, and unless I come down fifty pounds to a nameless anonymous assassin, I 'm told to look to my stables, for the scoundrels have made matches, and bought brimstone, and they 'll have blood, blood, blood!"

"If that is expressed in the writing," said Sir Mark, "it is a regular threatening letter," — here he made a fresh motion for it,—"and our friend the Justice would know how to deal with the author according to law."

"Every word of it is there," said Mrs. Twigg, "the three bloods and all. I 've read it over and over, till I have almost got it by heart. I 'm sure I wish a whitlow on every finger that had a hand in it. They have put Mr. T. in such a twitter that —"

"Hold your confounded fool's tongue, Madam," exclaimed Twigg. "Nobody was in a twitter but yourself. But here it is, Sir Mark — read it and judge, or may be you had better read it aloud for the benefit of Mrs. Hamilton. If it do n't smell like a house a-fire, my name 's not Twigg!"

Thus appealed to, the Baronet took the incendiary epistle, and began in a very audible and solemn voice to read as follows: the Twiggs severally making faces and gestures of horror as they conceived themselves to be alluded to personally in the denunciations.

"Sur,

"Wen this cums to hand you will soon sea Revenge. Hell-fire Dick nose what to doo. I have bought Brimstun for yew. Mersey his not to be had. Their ar lots of Matchis maid I can tell yew fury & Ruin Bloodsucker and Blazes dam Mister Burril as bean dun brown & mind yew dont git the saim send me fifty yeller boys and I will make yew safe yew dont no wat yew ar standin on yew may hav havvock or not as yew like but yew nad better come down. Look sharp to yure stabil & mind my wurds bloods the thing blood Blood Blood.

"Yure's to command,
"J. P."

"P. S. That young puppy of yures deserves hangin and soe does Madam. I wunder yew can keep sich a Bitch. Has for Matilda we are goin to cut her throte & bile her."

"There," exclaimed Twigg, at the conclusion of the letter, "there 's no mistake in that!"

"Did you ever hear, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," asked Mrs. Twigg, "such horrid blood-thirsty language, and scandalous vipertuperations? About myself, I can't repeat, but as regards poor 'Tilda, what can she have done that she 's to swelter in her gore?"

"Upon my honour, Madam," replied the Baronet, "if it 's no offence to say so, you 're all flourishing without any occasion!"

"Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," said the lady, "you astonish me. All flourishing! I wish we was!"

"My dear Madam," said Sir Mark, "the case is this. You receive a letter, a regular puzzler, and it makes you all throw up ——"

"Indeed, I confess for one," said the lady, "that it gave me a kind of a turn."

"Well, then," continued the figurative Fox-hunter, "after spreading this way and that, at last there is a challenge ——"

"I never thought of that," exclaimed Twigg, "but of course Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, you know more of challenges than I do. A man that has had to be his own shopman, could n't be expected to go out if he was called out. Of course it 's some Irish Dragoon officer, for I never read any thing in such a blunderbuss style in my life. It 's very odd though, says you, considering I have n't been a gentleman long enough to offend any body."

"My good Sir," said the Baronet, "you are quite at fault."

"Well, well," said Twigg, submissively, "if you say so, I 'll apologize, let him be who he will, and that 's saying a good deal for a man of my property."

"Zounds, man," exclaimed Sir Mark, "you 're more bewildered than an owl in daylight! You could n't be more stupified and abroad, if all the cock-sparrows of the parish were mobbing about your ears. There is n't a word about fighting in it, sword or pistol!"

"The Lord be praised!" ejaculated Mrs. Twigg. Mr. T. was never concerned in any honourable affair in his life; and so little used as he is to duelling, and letting off things, if no worse happened, he 'd be sure to shoot away his own fingers or something."

"It 's a pity Pa' don't learn," said Miss Twigg, "as shooting is so genteel. Every gentleman at Hollington goes out with his gun; and really it looks a great deal more becoming for a man of fortune, than a great green umbrella."

"That 's what I say," added Mrs. Twigg; "every blessed day. To be sure it 's late in life for Mr. T. to learn shooting — I wish he had belonged to the volunteers!"

"Volunteers be hanged!" said Twigg. "What could one volunteer do at a house a-fire? He could n't surround the property, could he?"

"You mean to say then, Sir, that the Hive is to be burnt down and gutted?" inquired Mrs. Twigg, with a rueful look at the Baronet.

"My dear Madam," said Sir Mark, "I mean to say, you 're quite at fault about the letter. There is not a word in it, except about dogs and horses. I have Havoc and Revenge, and fifty such names, in my own kennel — ask Kate there!"

"I have the pleasure of saying, Madam," said Mrs. Hamilton, "that I have seen many similar letters from Richard, the huntsman, to my brother."

"To be sure she has," said the Baronet. "But here comes the Squire, — he will pick it out in a moment."

In fact, having allowed a certain time on his watch for the fit to be done in, honest Ned at this juncture entered the room, accompanied by Ringwood, Raby, and the Creole, who were severally introduced, and Mrs. Hamilton saluted her nephews with great affection. The inquest on the letter was then resumed.

"Here, Squire," said the Baronet, "read this letter, and oblige us with a key to it's meaning. Twigg here sniffs fire and brimstone, and swears the Hive is going to be treated like a wasp's nest."

"Old Jack Pike, eh? — know his scrawl," said the Squire, as he glanced at the hand-writing; but he had no sooner got through the first sentence, than he began to slap his pocket, — "know it, eh? — to be sure I do, — about Revenge and Havoc, and the matches."

"Yes, and blood, blood, blood," said Mrs. Twigg, speaking hastily, "and fury and ruin, and cutting throats, and burning and doing us brown. You think as we do, Sir. It was dropt this very morning, Sir, dropped at our own door?"

"Like enough, Ma'am," said Ned, — dropped it myself, — called at the Hive this morning, — asked by young Twigg to look at a puppy, — can show you the cover, — E. Somerville, Esq., and all that, dated a month ago."

"Then it has nothing to do with murder, and arson, and extorting money?" inquired Twigg.

"Devil a word," answered the Squire, "all about long dogs and tits. Honest fellow, old Jack, — wanted me to come down to a coursing meeting."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, solemnly, — "here's a load off all our minds and spirits!"

"Oh it's like a calm after a storm at Margate," said Miss Matilda.

"To be sure it would have been a thousand pities," said Mrs. Twigg. "You must know, Mrs. Hamilton, we have been plotting and planning the most delightful feat shampeter, — but, after the letter, Mr. T. said it must all be given up, — or at all events done in-doors"

"I know I did," said Twigg, "and so would any one that stood in my shoes, as a man of property, and the bull's-eye of the whole plot. It's all very pleasant, for some people to be hornpiping on lawns, — or eating tarts under a tent, — or drinking syllabubs in summer-houses; but it is n't quite so pleasant, for a man that has toiled all his life, to be killed on his own freehold grounds, before he had time to enjoy his affluence. May be shot at, says you, from behind a tree, or stabbed by a ruffian out of a bush, like G. Barnwell, Esq., of Camberwell Grove."

The conversation now became general; and after the lapse of about an hour, the Humble Bee returned with his family to the Hive: a little dissatisfied, indeed, with their own sagacity and penetration, but infinitely delighted to find that they might hold their Bartlemy Fair on the lawn, without reckoning on a *Swing*.

CHAPTER XX.

I know not love, quoth he, nor will I know it;
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it."

VENUS AND ADONIS.

"Up, my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you 'll grow double."

WORDSWORTH

"The jars of brothers
Are like a small stone thrown into a river,
The breach scarce heard, but view the beaten current,
And you shall see a thousand angry rings
Rise in his face, still swelling and still growing."

ROLLO DUKE OF NORMANDY.

In spite of his admiration of Mrs. Hamilton's sentiment concerning love, and her precept against matchmaking, the Baronet could not resist the temptation offered by Ringwood's return to push forward his matrimonial scheme. His manœuvres in pursuance of this object resembled the attempt to take a fox in a trap. He baited with Grace Rivers, and laid many a trail up to her, by means of visits and messages, and commissions to Hawksley, in which Ringwood found himself engaged much oftener than he liked. There is a proverb, however, which says "you may bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink;" and even so you may bring young persons into company with each other, but you cannot force them to fall in love. Many a message the young man had to deliver at Mr. Justice Rivers', but, unlike messengers in general, he never stayed on his errands, he never went there superlatively well dressed, or came back with an abstracted or pensive air, nor did he show any particular emotion, when the name of the "first favourite" was proposed as a toast.

Above all, he showed no jealousy whatever of the great attention that was paid to her by Raby and St. Kitts; on the contrary, he occasionally undertook the delivery of the elegant extracts which his brother had culled for her, amongst the old poets. "Confound the fellow," said the father internally, "it beats pig-driving! the more I want to put him in the right road, the more he won't go!"

Sir Mark was a good deal disconcerted by this perversity in his son, and at last began to suspect that something equivalent to "pit full" must be written over the door of his heart. Under this impression he one day tried an experiment that produced a gleam of hope; but it turned out only a flash in the pan, or, as we should now say, a bad cap. He was riding side by side with Ringwood, and by way of getting at the truth by surprise, he abruptly put the question whether the latter had seen any girl at Oxford to compare with Grace Rivers?

"Nobody — not one," answered Ringwood, speaking with the back of his head towards his father. "How easily I could have her!"

"Have whom?" said Sir Mark, pricking up his ears.

"Puss there," said Ringwood, putting his thumb on full cock, and taking aim along his fore-finger, at a hare that was running into cover.

The promised weekly visits of the young lady at the Hall produced no better result; she only grew more fond of poetry, and Raby became more fond of copying it, to the usual exclusion of Nimrod, ramrod, and fishing-rod.

This congeniality of tastes did not escape the notice of the Baronet, and,

with some jealousy as to its probable effect, he endeavoured more strenuously than ever to drive Raby into the field, and Ringwood into the library; but without any other effect than of reviving the old bickerings between the brothers, each attributing to the other the persecution he endured. By dint of importunity Ringwood was induced to copy out something for Miss Rivers, and he wrote out a portion of Somerville's Chase; Raby by the same entreaty was persuaded to join in a day's coursing, and it is difficult to say which of these fish out of water suffered most in its strange element.

"If it was n't for your everlasting poetry," said Ringwood one day, "I should n't hear so much of my everlasting sporting. I wish to God you would hunt or shoot a little yourself, instead of being such a bookworm. — There 's fishing is a quiet studious sort of thing."

"Never," answered Raby, with emphasis. "I cannot bear the thought even of impaling a poor inoffensive worm on a hook to writhe in agony till he is drowned."

"But you might have a fly," said Ringwood, — "and, as you are so squeamish, you need not even impale a real one."

"True," said Raby, "but I happen to have read Cotton, with his directions for making artificial ones; and really I have no inclination to go through the varied course of sporting which would be requisite only to furnish me with dubbing."

"If I know what you mean," exclaimed Ringwood, "may I be pounded!"

"I speak," answered Raby, "from the book. I was tempted to read the instructions carefully for their whimsicality. To get only the materials for palmers, and stoneflys, and duns, and other technicals, would take up a greater portion of my life than I am disposed to spare. For instance, I must go bear-hunting, and scuffle with an old black bruin for a little of his skin, being particular to have him well tanned by the weather; then I must draw a badger for a bit of his fur; then I must take an otter for ditto; and then grope the banks for a water-rat and a water-mouse, if there be such an animal. I must beg the Squire for a pluck of hair at his black spaniel on the inside of the ear, and must remember at Oxford to buy or steal a bit of a barge sail. I must go hawking to get the herl of a heron, fox-hunting for the fur of an old red reynard, coursing for the scut of a hare the blackest I can get, and shooting for a rook's wing, a lapwing's crest, and a partridge's tail. I must climb up trees for martins and squirrels, comb black greyhounds with small tooth combs, and go swine-shearing for sanded hog's down. Last, not least, I must shave our black Tom cat, if he will let me, for the sake of his whiskers, and then, turning him round, I must take a twitch out of his tail!"

"Very well quizzed," answered Ringwood, "only you happen to know better. Every article you mention is to be had at the furrier's or elsewhere; but, if that is all, I will lend you my dubbing-bag, and a pocket-book of flies, ready made."

"I am obliged to you for the offer," replied Raby, "but to tell the truth, I entertain some serious doubts of the humanity of fishing; in spite of the authority of Izaak Walton, who tells us he leaves water-rats to be destroyed by other hands, for that he is not of a cruel nature, and loves to kill nothing but fish. To be pulled gasping out of the native element into another, as painful perhaps as fire to the human lungs, with a sharp hook sticking through the jaws, or more probably tearing the entrails—"

"Pshaw," exclaimed Ringwood, "that is the old story. You sit poring and poking over books till you get as sentimental and squeamish as a girl from boarding-school. Let Grace hunt out poetry for herself. For my own part I 'd as soon be a man-milliner at once; there's no great odds

that I can see between serving young ladies with yards of verses or yards of riband."

"And for my part," said Raby, reddening, "I'd as soon be a ratcatcher at once, as employ all the faculties of mind and body, day after day, in the pursuit of worthless vermin. I happen to conceive that man was endowed with powers of mind for higher purposes."

"Yes, to make love chime with dove, and so on, to the end of the chapter," retorted Ringwood. "I'd rather be a wagon horse, and go dozing along to my jingle of bells."

"And what is there after all in your hunting?" said Raby, with increasing warmth. "Why the very brutes beat you at your own game. The superior sagacity and quick sense of smell in the hound direct you the way to go; and the horse enables you to follow by the aid of animal powers infinitely surpassing your own. And truly, when all is done, a fox's tail is a notable feather in the cap of an intellectual being!"

"It has always been reckoned a manly trophy, however," said Ringwood, "and I cannot help thinking that Hercules, that man of all men, cut a devilish deal better figure while killing hydras, than when he took a distaff amongst the maids, no matter whether he was spinning flax or spinning verses!"

"I thought that argument was decided at Oxford," said the Creole, who had entered the room with his peculiar stealthiness, so that his presence had been unheeded.

"Yes," said Ringwood, vehemently, "and it was given against me! But then it was amongst Raby's own set, pedants, and bookworms, and ballad-mongers!"

"And quite as respectable a set," retorted Raby, "as coachmen, bruisers, and blacklegs."

"I believe that question was decided, too, at Oxford, by the Proctor," said the Creole, in a tone that stung Ringwood to the quick.

"Hark you, St. Kitts," he said, "I know your drift. Perhaps I have not trained on, in Greek and Latin, so well as yourself. But the next time you refer to College, I'd advise you to remember that I learned one thing at Oxford, at which you would come off second-best."

"The use of your fists, I presume," said the Creole, with a sneer, "or your mawleys, in the elegant slang of the ring. When I fight, it shall be with the weapons of a gentleman."

"Provided gentlemen will go out with you," said Ringwood. "They may choose to be as particular about arms, as you are about weapons, and object to a bend sinister."

"I am used to that taunt, and do not care for it," replied the Creole, with a look, however, which showed that use had not blunted its edge. "But beware of reflecting too often on my birth — the day may come when you will rue your own!" So saying he abruptly left the room; having acted as a sort of conductor to carry off the thunder and lightning which had been mustering between the brothers.

"It is really a pity, Ringwood," said Raby, as soon as they were left alone, "that you indulge so often in that reflection on St. Kitts. Of all his defects, that of his birth is the only one he cannot help. I heartily wish old Sir Thomas Browne, amongst his 'Vulgar Errours,' had noticed the very popular one of affixing on the offspring the reproach that belongs to the parent."

"I dare say you are right," returned Ringwood, "but my temper's hot and quick, and he likes to show it off on the fret, just because he can keep his own so well under command. That's why he's always poking me, to snarl and show my teeth, like a keeper with a wild beast; but try to stir him up himself, and except you touch him in one place, he's as cool

and impenetrable, confound him, as a man in armour. As the fellow said of his donkey, 'it 's only on that bit of raw that you can make him feel!'"

"I must confess," answered Raby, "he is somewhat like Achilles, who was invulnerable all but the heel; but I would refrain from inflicting such an ignoble wound. As for showing you up, if you would only blink and yawn, instead of growling and getting rampant, he would soon lay aside his long pole, and leave you to yourself."

"It 's good advice, and I 'll book it," said Ringwood. "And what I said to you, Raby, about sometimes painting your brown study of some other colour, was good advice, too. I do n't like people telling me my brother is a milksop."

"They may call me what they please," said Raby. "*De gustibus non est disputandum*, — my palate is not in another man's mouth. But look here, Ringwood, out of the window; you have touched him indeed on the bit of raw! he kept his temper too well barrelled to show us any of the working, but now he is taking out the vent-peg!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Raby, "he is hauling his horse about as if he 'd pull his head off! poor little Toby! And there 's a start — spurring and flogging, as if he was making his rush at the end! Here 's the old school boy spite over again — 'if I can't lick Will I 'll hide Tom!'"

Exactly as Ringwood described, the Creole galloped at racing speed down the avenue, as if the Judge's chair had been actually at the end. On coming to the high-road, however, he reduced the pace to a trot, and then turning into a shady secluded lane, he brought the horse to a walk, and threw the reins on his neck. "I am a fool to mind it," he muttered to himself, "for it comes from a fool. Why should I fret and wince under it? 'T is no fault of mine. I had not the ordering of my birth. Thousands are no more legitimate than I am; men of rank and station. What is legitimacy? a parson, a certificate, and a ring. Is there a stain on me from the womb, a stain like original sin, because my parents were not married? Am I doomed to infamy and disgrace for want of a mere form? Has it made me less virtuous, less sightly, less intellectual! Has it made me deformed in person or deficient of a sense; and shall man affix a stigma where heaven has set no mark! Is not my flesh as healthy, my blood as pure, my body as perfect in all its functions — aye as that of Ringwood himself! But no, no, no, this flattering unction will not do. Walter Tyrrel, you are a degraded being, and it avails you nothing that there are thousands under the same ban with yourself. Justice may award the shame to the parent, but the prejudice of man entails it on the child. The attainder of the father debases the blood of the son — true it is, indeed, that not one atom or globule of the tide of life can be wrought upon by a breath — but the voice of the world says it does, of the world in which I am to live. Grant that the honour or dishonour exists only in imagination; but are there not imaginary sorrows, and pains, and terrors, producing real agonies? What signifies that I am as perfect in limbs, as fully endowed with faculties, as Ringwood, in the eye of nature, when the world will not acknowledge the equality? am not I stamped with a brand, an everlasting brand, never to be effaced by time, never to be removed by honourable achievement, the more hopeless because impalpable and invisible — an airy nothing, indeed, but to which man has given a local habitation and a name! Besides, does the default not carry with it real penalties? will land descend to me, and from me to mine, from generation to generation, as if by divine right, to the end of time?

"No, no, a bastard I am, and must remain; and worst of all a brown bastard — aye, that was the word! There is a stain on my face as well as on my birth, a tinge derived from the blood of negroes, black heathens, and — the word chokes me — slaves!"

During the utterance of the foregoing soliloquy, he had, through excitement, gradually exalted his voice; and as soon as he had pronounced the last word, he heard it repeated in a lower tone. Supposing it to have proceeded merely from an echo, he never turned his head; but, in a few moments, he distinctly heard the same voice calling on "Walter Tyrrel." Considerably startled, he looked round for the speaker, and his brow darkened with displeasure, when he recognised the dark face of the fortune-telling woman, as she made her way through the hedge by the side of the road. He was immediately going to ride forward, but she sprang suddenly before him, and caught hold of the bridle.

"Let go, woman," he cried, his face flushing with anger, and his hand mechanically raising his riding whip above his head. "Let go, I say; I will hear no more of your infernal gibberish."

"Lower your whip!" she answered, with the tone and look of a command. "I have been used to stripes lately; but of all that breathe in the wide world, Walter Tyrrel is the last that should lay a lash on *me!*"

"Begone, hag," cried the Creole, in a still fiercer voice, for he was offended at the familiarity of her address; "if I touch him with the spur, you may repent the consequence."

"And your repentance," said the woman, reddening, "should exceed mine ten times told. But you know not what you do. I know things that, to hear, would thrill you with ecstacy — and others that should freeze you to the spot!"

"Enough," said the Creole, "I know my own fortune better than any gipsy — I must and will pass!"

"Pass over my body, then," said the woman, releasing the bridle, and planting herself, with outstretched arms, full before him in the middle of the road; "ride on, Walter Tyrrel, break these arms that nursed you, and mangle this bosom that nourished you."

"Impudent impostor!" exclaimed the Creole, rising into uncontrollable rage. "But you have been set on; dare to propagate this malicious invention, breathe it into another human ear, and it shall be the last syllable your tongue shall ever utter, if I tear it out with my own hands."

"Walter Tyrrel," replied the woman, as if she delighted in repeating the name, "no ear but your own has heard it, and no other shall hear it, provided you will listen to the rest. But deny me that, and I will proclaim it at noon-day from the Market-Cross."

"Say your say, then, and be quick," replied the Creole, partly astounded by her audacity, and partly unwilling to defy the threat of a being so wild and determined.

"What I have said already," said the woman, "is true; were the sun, moon, and stars now shining together in heaven, I would swear by them all, and by Him who made them, that what I have said is true. You owe all to me that a child owes to its nurse."

"Insolent, crazy beldam! that cursed story again — this is beyond earthly patience," cried the Creole, almost foaming with rage. "But that you are a woman, you should roll under my horse's feet."

"Walter Tyrrel," exclaimed the woman, while angry sparks flashed from her black eyes, "dare not to miscall me again, if you would have my blessing, and not my curse! but the story is strange, and I am strange," she added in a milder tone, "and I ought not perhaps to expect your implicit belief in it, without some token of its truth. Did you ever see a face like this?"

As she spoke, she drew from her bosom a small miniature, and held it up to St. Kitts, who instantly recognised the features: the shock and the surprise made him feel faint and sick; his eyes dazzled, his brain swam, and a loud sound, as of water boiling, began singing in his ears; he dis-

mounted hastily, or he would have fallen from his horse. "Gracious God, he gasped at last, "my father! where — how did you get it?"

"Be composed — be a man," said the woman, taking his hand between her own, which trembled, however, as violently as the Creole's. You know then I am no gipsy juggler, no gossipping impostor, no crazy beldam. Now summon your senses, and think back as far as you can into childhood, and tell me, if you remember any such name as — Indiana?"

"It seems as familiar to me," said the Creole, "as my own. My dear father mentioned it on his death-bed."

"And coupled it with a curse," said the woman.

"No," said St. Kitts. "In his delirium he accused her of stabbing him, but he was sensible when he died, and Indiana was amongst the very last words he murmured, with forgiveness and a blessing."

The woman's head dropped at these words; she hastily seated herself in the dust of the road, and covering her face with her hands, she wept till the tears gushed out between her fingers. It did not last long: with a violent effort she overcame her grief, and rose up, and spoke with a firm voice.

"Had she stabbed him to the heart, it had been but a just revenge. There are deeper and more cruel wounds than visible daggers can inflict — wounds that bleed inwardly, and are incurable; and Indiana had her share! But come, take a seat beside me on this bank, — this meeting is trying for us both."

The Creole silently seated himself by her side, his whole frame quivering with intense excitement and agitation. There was one absorbing question in his heart, which it yearned, yet dreaded, to have solved; and the first word of it rose as often to his throat, and was choked there, as the "Amen" of Macbeth. The woman perceived his emotion, and spoke first.

"I divine your thoughts. You think, perhaps *fear*, that I may be your mother?" St. Kitts nodded. "I was your mother's dearest friend — her sworn sister — your nurse. She was raised from the same station in life as my own, to be your father's favourite; and I lived with her as her companion, — the partaker of her fortune, the depositary of her secrets and wishes. You were as frequently at my breast as at hers, as often on my lap as on her knee; and I believe you owe me as many embraces and kisses. But your father was stabbed for inconstancy — your mother fled the island — and I became what you see me — an outcast and a wanderer."

"And my mother, is she still alive?" inquired the Creole.

"If she still lingers in this world of wo," replied the woman, "it must be, like me, as a forlorn wanderer."

"And you," said the Creole, "you are poor, perhaps houseless; gracious heaven! I remember you have been in prison at hard labour."

"Ay," said the woman, smiling bitterly, "but I complain not of anything I can now suffer at the hands of man. As for my poverty, I feel it not; so put up your purse. Should I want money, however, your hand, Walter Tyrrel, is the only one on earth that would not revolt my pride, though pride and I must now seem ill-assorted companions. And now, mark me; the world is a worthless weedy place to me; but its prejudices are of importance to the young and hopeful. My acquaintance can do you no credit. You must neither name me, nor recognise me, before others, whoever they may be; and this meeting must remain a secret in our own bosoms. Seek me not; heed me not; mention me not: but if I should summon you at any time, by sign or by token, be sure, Walter Tyrrel, to come to me, whether noonday or midnight, as if it concerned the salvation of your soul."

"I will obey your bidding, upon my honour and faith," replied St. Kitts; "and now this dear portrait — if gold will purchase it — "

"Not the Indies," said the woman, replacing it in her bosom; "your mother, in times of doubt and danger, confided it to me; and bound me, by a sacred oath, never to part with it, unless she claimed it from me herself. When I die, that trust shall devolve on you; and now, farewell! I hear footsteps in the lane. God bless you, Walter Tyrrel! God bless you!" His hand was snatched, and fondly kissed, and she again forced a passage through the hedge, and disappeared; leaving the Creole sitting on the bank, scarcely certain whether all that he had seen and heard had not been a day dream, and a delusion of the senses. He conjured up anew, in his mind's eye, her face and figure, as with outstretched arms she confronted him in the road, and bade him ride over her; and then fancy acted over again the whole of this singular scene in the drama of his life. "One question more," he exclaimed, suddenly starting to his feet, with a gesture of his arm, as if to detain her; but she was gone, and young Twigg stood grinning in the spot that she had occupied.

"Haw! haw! haw!" shouted the citizen's cub; "stage playing, eh? Good morning, Mr. Walter, I hope I do n't interrupt rehearsal?"

"I am no actor, Sir," said the Creole, who was in no humour to relish a jest.

"I beg pardon, but I meant no offence," said Twigg, junior; "I thought you was spouting for practice, and was glad to see it. Thinks I, he 'll come to our shampeater in character. I 'm going to sport a fancy dress, myself. The governor means it to be a jolly good to-do — Vauxhall gala — Twelfth-night — May-day — Masquerade, all rolled into one!"

"It is an extraordinary story," said the Creole, musing.

"An't it, my boy?" said young Twigg, with a smart punch of his elbow. "The regular thing to astonish the natives! I 'll lay a rump and dozen you won't guess my disguise!"

"A Jack-Pudding, may be," said the Creole, not very well pleased to have his thoughts interrupted by the rude freedom of his companion.

"No, no; hang Clowns and Fools," said the other, "they 're so common. I 'll put you up to it, my boy; but mind, it's a word and honour secret. It will be a precious lark, and make such a famous squall among the petticoats! I 'm going to dress up as the brown gipsy woman, that put dad and 'Tilda into such a funk!"

"Ay, a gipsy-woman; but the portrait," said the Creole, relapsing into abstraction, "the portrait stamps truth on it all!"

"Brawvo! ancoore!" shouted the delighted auditor. "That 's your sort! But go on, man, I wont laugh at you agin — go on about the miniter!"

"I must really beg pardon," said the Creole, recovering himself, "but my thoughts are engrossed by something very interesting I have just heard — I mean to say that I have just read."

"Ah, that 's a pity," said the cub. "I never read. It spoils one's sparklers, and makes a feller shortsighted, like your cousin Raby. He 'll have to sport goggles afore he 's twenty-one, and how will the gals like that? No, no, my boy, I mean to keep a sharp eye in my head, to have a slapbang at the swarms of partridges, and the flocks of pheasants, on the First of September!"

"Have you bagged any birds?" inquired St. Kitts, by way of saying something, his mind still wandering as to time and place.

"That 's a good un," said young Twigg, "and this is the 12th of April! — Thankee, I owe you one: but you did not catch me out. I was born within Bow-Bells sure enough, but I 'm not quite such a cockney as that. But by jingo," he added, looking hard at the other's face, "you seem wool-gathering! Come now, you 're trying to look as wise as King Solomon, but it won't do — it 's all sham-Abraham," and he gave St. Kitts a shaking and a slap on the back as if he was saving him from choking.

"'S death! Sir," exclaimed the Creole, out of all patience, "attempt such a liberty again and I'll knock you down! There, Sir, is your road, and this is mine; and I must beg to be left to myself till I can find better company than my own."

"Two can play at that," said the cub, winking knowingly, and throwing himself into a boxing attitude. "But what's the fun of showing fight, and shying up our castors, for nothing a side? Nobody wanted to rub you the wrong way, and yet you begin swearing and spitting; why you 're as crusty, man, as a notched loaf; a regular bear with a sore head!"

"Well, well," said St. Kitts, fearful of prolonging the discussion, "I am hasty, and something has happened to ruffle my temper: — so forgive me, and shake hands; and let us part till I am fitter to enjoy the pleasure of your society."

"Why, that's well said," answered young Twigg, "so tip us your daddle. And now we 're friends, take a friend's advice. Mind and come in full fig to the Feat; for the governor means to ask every body, whether he knows 'em or not, so we 're sure to have all the tip-top swells and nobs of the place. It won't be a very bad move neither, if you brush up your dancing a bit, and practise your toe-and-heels, and double-shuffles; for there's some first-rate hands at hornpipes a-coming; and you won't like to be cut out at the hop on the lawn."

"I will go into training on purpose," said St. Kitts, endeavouring to smile.

"There's lots of time," said young Twigg. "The gala can't be got up till May or June, and I 'm going to have a spell at the shop in the mean time. The governor sticks up like buckram for industry and application; so I 'm to bundle to-morrow, and not to show my nose again at Hollington till I 'm asked."

"Well, I wish you a pleasant journey," said the Creole, "and so good morning." The cub nodded a good-by; and St. Kitts, putting his horse to a canter, rode back thoughtfully to the Hall. Instead of alighting at the front door, he went round the house to the stables, where he dismounted, and, throwing the rein to a groom, made off by a back way into the garden, in order to recover his composure before he encountered his uncle or cousins. After revolving all that had passed in his interview with the brown woman, the conclusion he came to contributed little to the ease of his mind. It was too probable that his mother had been at least the descendant of a slave, a taint, even in the third and fourth generations, attended with absolute degradation in the West Indies, where it is not unusual for a lovely brunette, but a shade too brown, to find herself obliged to look on at a dance, for want of a gentleman with spirit or sense enough to stem the popular prejudice, by taking her for a partner. It is true that in coming to England the Creole had passed beyond the influence of such invidious distinctions; but early habits and daily example had so impressed on him the colonial theory, that he naturally estimated himself by its degrading scale, and was, in his own eyes, a being branded with a mark of inferiority wherever he went. Besides, he had fallen under a new reproach, that of illegitimacy, which has more sway in this island than in that of his birth; and the terms which the brown woman had used in speaking of his mother as the Colonel's "favourite," if not actual evidence, seemed to imply that Ringwood's accustomed taunt was founded on truth. The possession of his father's portrait, the recognition of himself, the allusion to Indiana with her jealousy and revenge, allowed him no room to doubt the veracity of her who claimed to have been his nurse; and he could not help wishing the Atlantic between himself and one who knew so much of his history. In spite of her injunctions as to secrecy, he could not feel certain but that he should one day be claimed as a foster-child by the "Queen of the Gipsies,"

a title which her bearing and appearance had obtained for her in the neighbourhood, and he foresaw, and felt in anticipation, the raillery and ridicule that would arise from such a text. Consistent as the woman had been in speech, there was a fitful wildness in her manner, which, on reflection, seemed to belong to insanity; and he trembled to think what crazy projects her infirm faculty might suggest, to his personal disgrace and annoyance. Imbittered by these reflections, his temper turned against the wanderer, and he fervently wished that the next time she came before Justice Rivers, it might be for some offence that would incur transportation beyond the seas, for the term of her natural life.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I can't get out — I can't get out!" said the starling.
STERNE'S SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

"I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell: and I say, there was never man thus abused."
MALVOLIO.

"Here I am, caught like a fox in a gin, a bear in a pitfall, a thief in a jail, a porpoise in a net, a frog in a well! I shall be killed and grilled! Help! help! Fire! Murder! Thieves! — Thieves! Murder! Fire!"
CAPTAIN CROWE.

THE next morning, as Twigg Junior had predicted, he was turned out of the Hive like a drone, and sent to mingle with the swarm of busy bees in the metropolis. As soon as he was gone, Twigg Senior clutched the great green umbrella that so offended Miss Matilda, and set out on a visit to Squire Ned, at his cottage, in order to confer with him about what he called "setting up in a new line of business." The reiterated wishes of his wife, and the urgent remonstrances of his daughter, had induced him to think seriously of taking the field, and having his old "ideas taught how to shoot;" particularly as he had remarked that every man of property carried a gun, took out a license, and shot over his own grounds. As his son had formed a sort of acquaintance with the Squire, he pitched upon the latter as a person he would request to put him, as he called it, "through his exercise;" and his present errand was to see whether Ned would undertake the instruction of a pupil so adult.

After half an hour's walk, he came in sight of the chimneys of the cottage, the refractory one towering a yard above the others, with a zig-zag pipe, wearing a tin gipsy-hat. Another specimen of Ned's mechanical ingenuity confronted the visiter at the very threshold, for on lifting the knocker, a small spring panel imediately revolved, and exhibited the words "Not at Home." On the fall of the knocker the inscription disappeared.

"By jingo," exclaimed the citizen, "it's not a bad plan, and particularly if you've got a decidedly serious servant, that objects to tell tarradiddles about your ins and outs. If the master 's abroad though, there can't be any harm in one's stepping in to sit down and rest a bit, for I do n't feel myself quite such a good walker, now I 'm a man of property, as I was when I used to trudge on errands!"

As the knocker, however, produced only the same intimation, he looked carefully about for a bell-handle, and at last, discovered a little brass knob, whereat he gave a pull; but instead of producing a ring, it unlatched the door, which immediately flew wide open of its own accord: a very necessary contrivance of the Squire's, in order to obtain access to his own premi-

ses, for his in-door establishment consisted only of an old housekeeper, who was so deaf that she would not have answered the summons of a Great Tom of Lincoln. Accordingly after two or three fruitless halloos, Twigg entered the passage, and, treading as cautiously as if he expected at every step to let off a steel-trap or a spring-gun, he came to a door on the right, which stood open, and allowed him a glimpse of the very thing he wanted, a settee.

On entering, he found himself in a circular room, panoramically painted, as if in continuation of the prospect which was seen through the one window, and so interesting was the landscape, and so beautifully executed, that even his fatigue did not prevent the citizen's making the tour of the chamber, and inspecting the picture in all its parts, particularly admiring a village church, the tower of which had a dial going by clockwork, and, as he satisfied himself by his own watch, keeping time very exactly. To observe the general effect the better, he shut the door, which closed with a spring, and then placing the settee in the centre of the room, he sat down to enjoy the exhibition at leisure. The same clockwork which regulated the church-dial gave motion to the sails of a windmill — it was altogether the most wonderful and amusing sight he had ever seen, and he had just come to the resolution that he would go back for Mrs. T. and Matilda, when a sudden thought occurred to him, which made him jump up suddenly from his seat, and begin to inspect the painting much too closely to be of advantage to its effect. But the search was in vain. The door with invisible hinges fitted to such a nicety, that he could not discover the least crack in the wall; and, in the bewilderment of his admiration at first sight of the panorama, he had taken no note of its situation. In vain he trotted round and round like a rat in a trap; and quite as fruitlessly he exerted his voice; nobody heard him; a painted shepherd kept regardlessly piping on to his flock, and an arch-looking Phillis sat provokingly smiling under a tree, as if in ridicule of his distress. There was no bell-rope to apply to, but, after a close scrutiny, he perceived a little knob at a cottage window; he pressed it, the lattice flew open, and a spring-tray protruded, furnished with biscuits, decanters of wine, and some glasses. Twigg was too much flustered, however, to profit by the discovery; every moment he got more nervous, to think how the Squire, almost a stranger to him, might resent the liberties he had taken in his house. With a tremulous hand he attempted to restore the cottage-window to *statu quo:* but not knowing the knack or applying too much force, the spring suddenly snapped, and it slammed to with a crash and a jingle that assured him he had broken all the glass that was within. He was in agony. One moment he prayed, the next minute he swore; he cursed his wife and his daughter for advising the visit, and himself for entering the house, and the Squire for contriving it. He consigned the painter to perdition, and the builder, and the man that had sold the glasses — then he appealed to heaven to get him out of the worst scrape he ever was in in all his life; and then, in a paroxysm of impotent rage, he shook his fist at the insensible shepherd, and made faces at the smiling shepherdess.

It occurred to him, at last, that as he could not show himself the door, he might turn himself out of the window; but Ned's window was not made like other people's; and it would neither throw up, nor pull down, nor open sideways. It would not even allow a single pane to open, like the old casements, to give him a little air, of which he really stood in need. The drops hung on his forehead, and he was as flushed in the face as if he had been cooking a dinner for the Beefsteak Club. A new experiment presented itself, and with no better result; a large knob, painted like a ripe apple in an orchard, being turned, set a bird-organ playing, and he did not know how to stop it; although, in the excited state of his nerves, the mu-

sic had as jarring an effect as if it had been the clang of a copper-foundry. He wished himself any where ; — back in business, — in a horse-pond, — in a mob, — in an Irish row, — in a storm at sea, — in the Bench, — in a condemned cell, — in a coffin. He sat down, and jumped up again ; he wrung his hands, — stamped about, — ground his teeth, and raved. He called on the Devil to fly away with him ; wanted the earth to open and swallow him up ; wished himself turned into a spider, or a blue-bottle. In short, he did and said a thousand extravagances ; and all the while he vented his exclamations and lamentations, the infernal bird-organ kept warbling its accompaniment, driving him as wild and rampant as a cow at the buzz of a breeze-fly. He slapped his own face, pulled his own nose, and did all he could ; if it had been possible, he would have kicked himself for being such an ass as to get into such a pound.

Passionate men are always unreasonable. An hour passed away, and the Squire did not make his appearance, for which Twigg bestowed on him all the abusive epithets, simple and compound, his memory or imagination could furnish. He swore that honest Ned had gone out, and remained out on purpose ; and gave him credit for the most atrocious and barbarous devices. He thought he snuffed brimstone ; then, that the floor was growing hot under him ; then, that he felt trap-doors opening beneath his feet. Stimulated by these terrors, he had almost made himself up, like an imprisoned cat, for a desperate dash through the window, when he observed another little knob, which he supposed would liberate the sash. He pressed it, accordingly, when lo, instead of the windows flying open, as he expected, two outer shutters flapped to, and, in an instant, by way of climax to his horrors, he was immersed in Cimmerian darkness.

What a situation for a man of weak nerves ! He did not dare to stir ; but he bellowed murder till he was as hoarse as a raven, and as hot, faint, weary, and thirsty as Governor Holwell in the Black-Hole at Calcutta. At last, just as he had given himself over, he discovered where the door was, by its being suddenly opened in his face ; the smiling shepherdess favouring him with a salute that made him clap his hand in some trepidation to his nose, while the water gushed from his eyes.

"Dark, eh ?" exclaimed the Squire, as he looked into the room ; "who the deuce ——— "

"It 's me, T. Twigg, Esquire, of the Hive, Hollington," responded a snuffling voice from the interior. .

"Stand fast," said Ned, — "soon be all right ;" and in a moment the shutters flew back, and allowed the daylight to introduce the two gentlemen to each other.

"Glad to see you," said Ned ; "ought to have been home sooner ; but Barney cast a shoe. Have n't waited long, eh ?"

"Pray, do n't mention it," resumed Twigg ; "a retired man of property, like me, is n't tied to time. He can always spare a couple of hours, or so ; and I never spent any time more agreeably ; what with looking at the picture, and listening to the pretty music of the bird-organ. Mr. Squire, you have a delightful fancy-room here ; you have indeed !"

"Pretty well," said Ned, evidently gratified at this praise ; "a mere whim. An my own plan, — elevation, section, and all that !"

"Mr. Squire," said Twigg, "I hope it 's no intrusion ; but having a little matter to talk about with you, I determined to walk over at once."

"Quite right," said Ned, "heartily welcome — pray sit down — walked, eh ? — a decent pull, — a bit of a snack will come well after that," and the host made a motion towards the cottage window, which contained the tray.

"Pray do n't trouble yourself," said Twigg, interposing, "I beg you won't, — I insist upon it, — I assure you I lunched five minutes ago — that is to say — I never lunch, for fear of spoiling my dinner."

"Only a glass of wine, and a bite of biscuit," said Ned, still making for the depôt.

"Not for the world, my dear Sir," replied Twigg, taking hold of the Squire by both arms; I can't digest of a morning, I should have the heartburn; sherry, before dinner, always gives me the heartburn, as sure as a gun!"

In spite of this protestation, the speaker never longed so much for a glass of wine in his life; but he had not moral courage enough to face the disclosure of the damage he had done. Every man has his bug-bear; and Twigg's was a nervous horror of what he called "kicking up rumpuses in strange houses;" and he felt all the anxious terrors of a murderer, who expected, every moment, that the mangled relics of his victim would be brought to light. Afraid, after all his excuses, that the Squire might take it into his head to go to the cupboard, he had recourse to a stroke of generalship. Affecting to have examined one side of the room, he removed the settee to the other, gradually backing, as if for the sake of the effect, till he had planted himself right in front of the cottage window that enclosed his secret; and in this favourable position he felt more at ease to enter on the object of his visit.

"It 's very ridiculous, Mr. Squire," said Twigg, after some preliminary humming and hawing, "and you'll hardly believe it of one in my wealthy and respectable station in life, but I never let off anything since I was a baby — never, not even a pop-gun."

"Very odd indeed," said Ned. "What could your father and mother be about? Not like me. Had a single barrel at twelve, a double at fourteen, won a pigeon-cup at fifteen, the crack of the volunteer rifles at eighteen, and at twenty never wanted a pair of snuffers, when there was a pair of pistols. Nothing like beginning young, — always break your dogs while they 're puppies."

"That 's very true," said Twigg, "but when I was young I 'd no chance, no more than if I 'd been born in a bandbox. Boys bred at cheap Yorkshire schools, if they a' n't forbid gunpowder, are forbid pocket-money, which comes to the same thing. With only one suit to our backs we could never get up a Guy, and till I came to London I did n't know a squib from a sassage. I do n't mind saying what I rose from. Many a time the morning sun seems to get up out of a dunghill, or a chimney-pot, but he makes his way uppards, and leaves off all in a blaze, among purple clouds, turned up with crimson, and laced with silver and gold like a sheriff's liveries."

"Looks awkward tho'," said Ned, "for a country gentleman not to be up to a gun — very awkward indeed — wonder you a' n't quizzed!"

"That 's just what I 'm afraid of," answered Twigg; "all the Hollington gentry go volleying about their fields, and it looks as if I could n't afford a license, — or that my freehold landed estate, and the game, was n't my own property. I should really like to pop about a bit, whether I hit nothing or not, just for the look of the thing; and a protection besides, for the country roads always swarm with footpads and highwaymen, and the bye lanes with gipsies and vagabonds. As Mrs. Twigg says, when it comes to money or your life, what 's an umbrella against a shower of shot? There 'd be some sense, says she, in a musket and a good mastiff, for I would n't give a fig for the little footy spaniels the Hollington gentlemen are so fond of!"

"Mastiff, eh?" said Ned; "very well for flushing a burglar, but won't do for cocks — must have spaniels."

"Well," said Twigg, "that 's neither here nor there. It 's the gunnery I want to learn; the prime and load, and make ready, present, fire. As I said before, I know no more about it than the man in the moon; and as you 've been so kind as to give T. junior a help out in his sporting, if you 'd extend your favours in the same line, and give me a bit of a drill now and

then, the same would have been thankfully received, and gratefully acknowledged."

"With all my heart," said the good-natured Squire; "come along,—begin at once,—have a bang or two at the old barn."

"What, with a regular full load?" inquired Twigg, with some trepidation.

"To be sure," said Ned; "a regular charge—fit to bring down a pheasant."

"Mr. Squire," said Twigg, "I hope you 'll excuse my objections, but I 'm one of the old school, and like to begin at the beginning. A, B, C, first, you know, and then words of one syllable, and then two syllables, and so on. I want to be well grounded in the rudiment; and so, if it 's the same to you, I would prefer commencing with flashes in the pans."

"Flashes in fiddlesticks!" said Ned; "phoo, phoo, the barrel 's clean—won't want a kicking-strap;—do n't be nervous."

"Between you and me," said Twigg, "my nerves are a little out of sorts I 'm afraid I pushed the bottle last night rather too freely, and my hand shakes so, I 'm sure I could n't hit your old barn if it was as big as the Mansion-house! Unaccustomed as I am to public shooting, I should injure somebody—I should, upon my life!"

"Never mind," said Ned, "every body for themselves."

"No, no," answered Twigg. "I positively won't shoot to-day, but am obliged all the same. I never meant to begin this morning. I only came to feel my way; I did indeed; and besides it 's getting late. I 'll come again, with a long morning before me, Mr. Squire, and we 'll pop off like old gooseberry!"

"Name your time," said the Squire.

"Why, then, suppose we say Monday," said Twigg, "or Monday week; or Monday fortnight; for then I can get a jacket and cetera made against our field-day. I dare say I shall be a rare awkward squad, Mr. Squire; but you must make allowances. I 'm raw at it, quite raw—and never as much as let off a penny cannon! But we must live and learn. I expect I shall jump at the first bang or two; but, says you, I 'd plug my ears well with cotton."

"Monday fortnight, then," said Ned—"that 's the fixture. But hold hard—mus n't go without a snack—a glass of wine any how, and success to the trigger!"

"I could n't drink a drop, if it was to save my life," declared Twigg, fervently wishing that between his host and the cupboard there had been a high wall, with all the broken glass on the top of it. A question followed, for which he had good reasons of his own, although its oddness made Ned stare as hard as a man could stare who had only one eye.

"Mr. Squire—if I may ask,—do you keep a cat?"

"Never," said Ned;—"take all their nine lives, if they come into the place. Worse than foxes among game! Never kept cats in my life—barring ferrets."

"You astonish me," said Twigg; "I wonder how you manage. At Hollington we should be eaten up alive by the rats and mice, if it was n't for the cats: I can't say I like cats myself: but they 're useful animals in their way; though, to be sure, they play the deuce with us now and then, by getting into our cupboards, and knocking down the glass and china!"

So saying, he looked at his watch and jumped up with an exclamation on the flight of time; whereupon, taking a hasty leave of the Squire, he trotted off with the pace of a man who has backed himself to perform four miles within the hour; two forwards, trundling a hoop, and two backwards, wheeling a barrow, with a stone to be picked up at every twenty yards.

The ex-citizen, although he had succeeded in engaging a Mentor, to direct him in the field, was not particularly well pleased with the result of

his visit to the cottage. He had a violent desire to do as those of his Roma did, and to put himself on a par with his neighbours at Hollington; so that a gun appeared a desirable object in perspective, but the moment that fire-arms were going actually to be put into his hands, he found his courage, like that of Acres, beginning to ooze out of the ends of his fingers. The abrupt character of Ned, too, excited his distaste and distrust. "I do n't fancy him," said he to himself; "he 's too daring. We must creep before we go; and if he had proposed half-loads at first, or popping off pocket-pistols, I should n't have minded; but to begin with letting off a whole barrel of powder and shot, or may be two barrels, does n't seem prudent. He 's a great deal too daring; and, by the way, I observed he 'd blown off two of his own fingers — of course, not by a moderate scale of charges!"

So saying, he clutched more firmly his old weapon, the green umbrella, and gave it a flourish, as if deciding upon sticking to it; when suddenly he heard a low grumbling sound from the hedge, like the maundering of a cantankerous bull. He immediately halted, and spread open his parapluie, which is popularly supposed to be the best object in the world for scaring off cattle; but instead of a bull, an ungainly human animal came scrambling over a stile, and in a moment stood before Twigg like a lion in his path, and scowling upon him from under a pair of black shaggy eyebrows. He was at least six feet high, broad-chested and high-shouldered, long-legged and long-armed, and the upper limbs kept sawing the air like the sails of a windmill, one huge hand brandishing a roll of paper, and the other a walking-stick, which showed a good cross of the cudgel. He had a vile overhanging brow, and his deep-set eyes played at bo-peep behind his prominent cheek-bones; his nose was large and his mouth wide, with a projecting lower jaw, and jowls like a bull-dog. Altogether, it was a countenance that, stamped on the copper coin, would have made a good halfpenny look like a bad one. His lank hair hung unkempt from under a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, and his whole suit of apparel was black, somewhat rusty. In short, he looked not unlike what one would conceive of Eugene Aram, part schoolmaster, and part murderer, and a very ugly customer, as Twigg felt at a glance, for a man of property to encounter in a long lane without a turning.

"Hold!" said the man, in a harsh, grating voice. "Stand fast, and look to your ways! Do you know where you are a-going!"

"To be sure I do," said Twigg, with a quaver in his voice; "I 'm going to Hollingten."

"Aye, so you thinks," said the man, "and so thinks the blind as gropes in the dark. But you 're a-going a road you little dream on!"

"If I 'm trespassing," said Twigg, "I beg a thousand pardons. I 'd go a mile round rather than trespass on any gentleman's private grounds. Nobody respects property more than I do!"

"Dirt and dross," said the man, "dirt and dross. Think on your immortal soul; for Death cometh before you are awares!" — and he gave such a flourish of his bludgeon, that Twigg involuntarily made a parry with his umbrella. Like Robinson Crusoe in the thunder-storm, when his powder-magazine, and all the consequences of its explosion, flashed across his mind, as swiftly as the lightning across his eyes, the citizen's fears crowded a hundred thoughts into a second of time. He recalled the threatening letter, with all its horrible denunciations — suspected the Squire had adopted it out of good nature, to pacify the family fears — and jumped to the conclusion, all in a breath, that the frowning figure before him was that arch-incendiary, Hell-Fire Dick himself.

"Mr. Richard," began Twigg, with as civil a manner as he could assume, and edging off a little to the right —

"Do n't Richard me," said the man, warily dodging him: "my name 's

Uriah, a chosen instrument to do his work" — here a whirl of the bludgeon— "and one what won't do it negligently. Prepare, I say; prepare for death: the enemy is at hand. There's flames of fire awaiting for you, and burning brimstone!"

"I know it," said Twigg, with a groan. "Your favour came duly to hand. But is there no way — won't the fifty yellow boys buy mercy? I have n't got 'em about me, but if you 'll name your own time and place to send 'em to — sha' n't we be saved from the fire?"

"No," answered the man, in a tone that startled Twigg like a clap of thunder; — and then presenting his roll of paper at the citizen as if it had been a horse-pistol, he added, "Read this here!"

"If it 's the same to you," said Twigg, shuddering, and drawing back as if from a red-hot poker, "I'd rather not. I've had one of your bloody burning notices, and it 's quite enough. I would n't read another for the world!"

"Die then, and be d—d!" shouted the man, with such a ferocious face and such an awful flourish of both arms, bludgeon and all, that Twigg felt certain his last hour was at hand. Collecting all his energy, he gave his umbrella a flirt open, full in the face of his enemy, and then, taking advantage of this manœuvre, he sprung past him, and set off homeward at a pace that belongs only to a man who is running for life, dear life. The ruffian he thought pursued him; — he fancied he heard his heavy tread — every instant he expected to feel the formidable stick descend upon his devoted skull, — and absorbed in this retrospective review, he almost ran under the horse's nose before he was aware of meeting the old covered chaise of Dr. Bellamy.

"Mr. Twigg," said Old Formality, pulling up and bowing, "this is really an unexpected gratification. But, gracious heaven, — if I may presume to ask, Sir, what has produced these symptoms of nervous irritability? — for, begging pardon for the liberty of the remark, I have the pleasure of meeting with you under very strong symptoms of excitement."

"It 's murder 's the matter," said Twigg, gasping for breath; "wilful murder! — Doctor — I 've been stopped! — "

"The Lord forbid!" ejaculated Old Formality, and in spite of his habitual politeness he pulled his horse round and turned the back of his vehicle on the owner of the Hive. However, before the old rhubarb-coloured draught-horse could lift his legs into trot, he recollected himself and his urbanity, and desiring the boy to get up behind, he invited Twigg to occupy the vacant seat, insisting that the arterial palpitation and pectoral action would be perniciously aggravated by the walk to Hollington. It was too agreeable an offer to be declined, and Twigg ascended with great alacrity into the vehicle, where he related at full length his tale of terror, concluding with rather an exaggerated description of the bloodthirsty Uriah.

"I know Uriah well," said the Doctor, "and really am shocked to have to use such terms of speech; but moral indignation compels me to say he is a sad scoundrel and hypocrite. He keeps what is vulgarly called a shop of all sorts in the village, and is a general dealer, so general, indeed, that religion is one of his items of trade. The paper he had the honour of offering for your acceptance was indubitably a tract, and his exhibition of sulphur, in a state of combustion, involved a spiritual meaning; for he has a determined predisposition to consign people to a place, which, as the polished Pope says, ought not to be named in polite ears. My truly amiable and excellent partner condescended to deal with him some time, but she was eventually compelled to decline, owing to what, in delicate language, might be called a tendency to mistake troy weight for avoirdupois."

"Ah, like enough," said Twigg. "We had some of the same serious kidney in the hardware line, and precious screws they were. There was that Elisha Dove, he wanted to do me out of some goods by a regular swin

dle; but I knew he was one of the decided pious, that wrote scripture texts on the backs of his cheques, and that put me on my guard. No, no, I do n't see what tracts has to do with trade, and always suspect a man that carries his religion into his counting-house, and opens his Bible with one hand and his leger with the other. I never meet one of them, but says I to myself 'take care of your pocket!' They cheat and lie on one side of the book, and then set off their tract-giving on the other, by way of a per contra. I 'll be bound this Uriah strikes some such balance against the devil every Saturday night!"

"Mr. Twigg," said the Doctor, "I have the pleasure of entirely coinciding in your disagreeable opinion. The individual alluded to has a little chapel of his own appended to his back-shop, and I am credibly informed, by a character of undeniable veracity, that he has seen a letter from Uriah to his town agent, containing a business order for a hogshead of sugar, two chests of souchong, five hundred weight of soap, a barrel of red herrings, and one evangelical minister, all at the lowest quotations."

"I do n't doubt it a bit," said the citizen; "I have seen such advices myself."

"To discard what only excites jocularity," said the physician, "I have professionally witnessed the pernicious, and, I may add, fatal effects of this reprehensible fanaticism. I have known patients, in the very crisis of their disorder, terrified into deliriums by the intrusion of this very Uriah at their bedsides, with his ranting exhortations and blasphemous denunciations. I have known the agonized feelings of the survivors shocked and outraged by his uncharitable and indecent application of scriptural texts to the character of the defunct; nay, I have seen the very clergyman at the grave insulted and interrupted in the performance of his melancholy duties, by the attempts of Uriah to, what he calls, improve the occasion by an extempore discourse of his own!"

"He deserves ducking in a horse-pond," exclaimed Twigg, naturally adding his own terrors to the account. "They 're the pests of society. Look at my own case. It 's very hard, Dr. Bellamy, that a man of my property cannot enjoy a rural walk on foot, but he must be beset by crazy gipsy-women or ranting Methodist parsons! If I get off this time with a fever, I shall reckon it cheap, for my nerves were never so shook in my life. It 's like a palsy; but, says you, it 's your own fault; a man that has just set up his carriage has no need to walk at all!"

They now arrived at the Hive, where, in spite of Twigg's remonstrances, he was immediately sent to bed by the desire of the Doctor, who besides taking away a liberal allowance of blood, subjected his patient to such a rigorous low regimen, that before three days were over, the citizen quite gave up any idea of ever dying by a violent death.

CHAPTER XXII.

"In every act they see that lurking foe,
Let loose a while about the world to go;
A dragon flying round the earth, to kill
The heavenly hope, and prompt the carnal will:
Whom sainted knights attack, in sinners' cause,
And force the wounded victim from his paws!"

CRABBE.

"Violent outcries, howling, gnashing of teeth, frightful convulsions, frenzy, epileptic and apoplectic symptoms were excited, in turn, on different individuals. Cries were heard, as of people being put to the sword; and the ravings of despair, which seemed to arise from an actual foretaste of torment, were strongly blended with rapturous shouts of glory! — glory!"

SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF WESLEY.

"Ay, do despise me, I 'm the prouder for it! I likes to be despised!"

MAWWORM.

THE formidable personage introduced in the last chapter, under the name of Uriah Bundy, was one of a provincial class of Methodists, who, if they had not adopted the name, eminently deserved the title of ranters, not merely for the bombastic fustian which they uttered, or rather howled, but for the violent gesticulations and antics the body performed by way of accompaniment. In these accomplishments the general dealer in question was eminently gifted, and like certain persons who keep private presses, for the pleasure of seeing themselves in print, so Uriah founded a private chapel, partly that he might enjoy the gratification of lifting up his own voice in a pulpit; for whenever, to use a shop-term, he was out of ministers, he invariably supplied the deficiency in his own person. Indeed it was shrewdly suspected, as the cushion-thumpers became more frequently absent and for longer intervals, and as his sermons increased in length and unction, that Uriah contemplated a gradual retirement from business, and ultimate devotion of himself to what he called his vineyard. This event was looked forward to with considerable gratification by those who sat under him, amongst whom he had acquired the reputation of being a powerful instrument, a phrase particularly happy, in reference to his physical abilities, for with the voice of a Stentor, he had the strength of a Milo, and when he bellowed, in the slang of his conventicle, about wrestling with the Evil One, he displayed a pair of long brawny arms, and a broad chest, such as would have delighted that enthusiast in back-locks, in-locks, hanging-trippets, and Cornish hugs, Sir Thomas Parkyns, Baronet, of Bunny Park. Indeed it was said by some of the elders of the village, that Uriah, when a young man, had been a notorious wrestler and cudgel-player, although as P. P., the clerk of the parish, says in his autobiography, "he had now laid aside the carnal delights and powdered vanities of his youth, considering himself, as it were, a shred of the linen vestment of Aaron."

In the opinion of his followers his ministry was blessed with abundant fruits, that is to say the walls of his conventicle sometimes rang again with the shrieks and groans and yells, and the whole building shook and rattled with the frantic stamping and jumping. The old men went crazy, the old women into fits, and the young men and maidens kissed one another, and ranted, and canted, and anticked their caps off their heads, and the clothes off their backs. — The same frenzy pursued them to their homes and hearths. Now and then a fanatic mother haggled her little boy's throat instead of cutting his bread and butter, or strangled her little girl instead

of tying her pinafore: but the devil got all the blame of the deed, and the fame of Uriah increased.

To some ears, however, there was something inexpressibly shocking in passing the chapel-door, and hearing the innocent voices of childhood chanting an infernal chorus, literally extracted from a hymn book: —

"I am, I am out of Hell!"

And to some eyes on a week day, when the chapel was converted to a school-room, it was no less repulsive to see the same children, with horror-stricken faces, and abject souls, trembling and shivering at the very name of God; their young hopeless hearts withering the while under the harrowing denunciations of a frantic bellowing monster, with a face like an Ogre, by way of illustrating the divine invitation of "suffer little children to come to me!" But to sweep off prematurely all the bright beautiful bloom of childhood; to blot out the serene blue heaven of its thoughts with the foul sulphurous smoke of the infernal pit — to scorch up what Shakspeare calls the dew of youth with the heat of nameless fires — to trail over all nature the slime of original sin, and the blight of the universal curse — to involve Hope and Joy, like the sons of Laocoon, in the endless folds of the old Serpent — to exhibit this wondrous fair creation hovered over, not by an emblematic dove, but a ravening vulture — to invest the Deity himself identically with the fiendish attributes of Satan — yes, even this horrible and blasphemous transfiguration passes with some depraved minds for piety, and an act of service to religion; as if from such a faith to infidelity would not be an alluring and natural transition.

The spiritual calling of Uriah was of no slight advantage to his worldly interest; his customers never thought of weighing tea or soap after such a pattern of sanctity; they were gravel-blind to the sand in the moist sugar, and digested the pebbles in his currants like so many ostriches. In promoting the consumption of one article indeed, his preaching had a direct effect; for Uriah dealt in candles, and so effectually had he stuffed the imaginations of his juvenile hearers with devils and pitchforks, and cauldrons of boiling brimstone, that half the poor children of the parish would not sleep without a rushlight in the room. It may be doubted, therefore, whether he would have attacked the proprietor of the Hive quite so offensively, if he had not happened to receive a consignment of goods by the same wagon which carried Twigg's hardware to Hollington, a circumstance from which the shop-keeper inferred that the family was generally to be supplied from London, instead of patronizing his own emporium. A man's private affairs are generally considered sacred from intrusion, and his religion is, or ought to be, held the most sacred of his private affairs; but our ranter felt no delicacy or diffidence in accosting a perfect stranger, and prying into the concerns of his soul. Modesty is no characteristic of the fraternity, and, to use Uriah's own words, whenever he took the work in hand, he rubbed his face over with a brass candlestick. The sequel has been told. Twigg took to his heels; and the preacher, with a triumphant flourish of his stick, resumed his course, exulting that he had made a sinner shake in his shoes; and moreover a sinner that indulged in the vanities of blue and orange liveries, a stately coach and a heathen behind, as black as Beelzebub himself.

In his next hearer the ranter was not so fortunate. He had gone swinging, and striding, and muttering about a hundred yards down the road when he perceived the brown woman approaching, or, as she was popularly called the Queen of the Gipsies: a tribe especially marked out for conversion by the ranter, who immediately "straddled across the path," like Apollyon in

the Pilgrim's Progress, and prepared himself for the fight. He accosted her in the same style that he had used to Twigg.

"Stay woman! I have a message unto you! I come with glad tidings."

"Say on then," said the woman, "such tidings have long been strange to these ears."

"You 're a cursed race," shouted the ranter, as usual beating time with his stick; "there's a place prepared for you, in the bottomless pit, along with the Devil and his angels — Yes, you, and your father, and the mother as bore ye, and your brothers, and your sisters, and the babes at the bosom, all, every man jack of you, as sure as you dwell in tents! You 'll be all biled and fried in hot pitch and burning brimstone, the whole tribe of you, tents, donkeys, and all."

"Fool!" said the woman, with a look and gesture of ineffable scorn, "stand aside and let me pass!"

"Not till I've convarted ye," said the ranter, frustrating her attempt to go by. "Not till I've stirred up your conscience like stirring up marrow with a spoon; and made you howl over your sins like a flogged hound. You 're a stray sheep, and I 'm the shepherd's dog as you 're to be driv' by into the fold."

"Bark on then," said the woman, quietly seating herself on the bank by the roadside, with something of her usual waywardness, for at other seasons such an interruption would have roused her into fury. Possibly she had time on her hands, and was willing to be amused by his wild absurdities; perhaps she was inclined to vent a splenetic humour in wordy controversy with a being as strange and violent as herself; however she sat down, and the ranter took a seat by her side; but not till he had cut a preliminary caper, shouting "Glory! glory!" and promising, with an appropriate whirl of his weapon, to smite the wicked heathen back and belly, hip and thigh. The woman however interrupted the very first sentence of his sermon, speaking to him with the tone and manner that she would have used to a slave in St. Christopher's.

"Take your eyes off me. Let go my hand, — and sit farther apart!"

"Ay, ay," said the ranter, "you would n't care if you and all goodness and holiness was miles and miles asunder! but I 'll so duck you, and bob you, neck and crop, and dip and wallop you in the Red Sea, that afore we parts, you shall be as glad to hug me, and cling to me, as drowndin' kitten to a pail."

"Fool! idiot!" exclaimed the woman. "Is this vulgar jargon to give your faith a victory over mine?"

"I speaks as I am bid to," said the ranter. "It 's the gift of tongues; and I won't go for to pick my words, no, not if you was the Queen of Sheba, and stuck all over with peacocks' tails. I 've tackled worse sinners then you — ten times worser and wickeder — tough old grayheaded sinners possessed with devils; but I 've drawed 'em out, tooth and nail, as you 'd draw a badger. And I 've grappled with young sinners too, tender women, and maidens, and I 've took them by the arms, and by the shoulders, and by the neck, and by the waist, and shook out their devils as you 'd shake the gravel out of your shoe!"

"Hands off, villain!" exclaimed the woman, suddenly starting to her feet. "Dare to touch me, and you shall find I have a devil in me too!"

"That 's him!" shouted the ranter, also rising up; "that 's the devil as spoke; I knowed his voice. Many a tight tussle I 've had with old Cock-ahoop! Ay, many a stiff round on it; but thanks to grace, I always broke slap-dash through his guard. And then I so tongue-banged him, a slap here, and a slash there" — here he went through a bout of single-stick — "that he had n't a sound spot on his black carcass as big as a tester; no, not from the top of his horns to the tip of his tail! But I am called to the

work; and as I wrastled with him, so will I wrastle with you, thou Jezebel, thou painted sepulchre, thou wicked pagan heathen!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the woman, while a red spot rose on her forehead, and a wild and dangerous light flashed from her dark eyes, "were it now as it has been, for the least of those infamous names thy vile flesh should be cut quivering from thy bones with the cart-whip; and the musquito and the maggot should be the sole dressers of thy wounds! Stand off, I say! one pace nearer, and thy blood be on thine head. I warn thee, let me pass untouched."

"Not without the embrace of charity," bellowed the ranter, with a wild flourish of his arms and hideous contortions of his countenance; "Not without the kiss of peace and good will;" and he sprang towards her. His arms were flung round her neck, his face pressed closely against hers; she was sinking under his weight, when suddenly the sharp-pointed knife, described by Squire Ned, entered the ruffian's side. He yelled fearfully — aimed an ineffectual blow — staggered a few paces off — howled a curse — rolled his eyes horribly, — and fell backward in the dust!

The wound, though severe, was not mortal. After lying insensible for some time, he revived; his ears ringing with the confused sound of human voices, amidst which he gradually distinguished repeated cries of "Here! Tigress! Fury! Vengeance! Vengeance! Vengeance!" With some difficulty he raised himself on his elbow, and as the mist cleared away from his eyes, he perceived Dick the huntsman trotting up the lane, followed by two whippers-in, and the Baronet's pack of fox hounds, which had been taken out for an airing.

"Zounds, Bob!" exclaimed the huntsman, as he pulled up at the wounded man, "here has been a game at sharps!" he immediately alighted, and Bob did the same, resigning their horses to the second whip, who stood aloof with the dogs.

"Odd zookers!" cried Bob, as he assisted in removing Uriah to the side of the road, and placing him in a sitting posture with his back against the bank, "it be th' ould rantipole parson himself! I tould un his being so hard-mouthed to folk would some day get un a sorting!"

"Hold hard, Bob," said the huntsman; "it 's not the time to open on him. Uriah, how goes it — how d' ye feel? Come! Hold up man, hold up! you 'll have another chance for it; you har n't booked a place yet in the dust-cart!" But Uriah made no answer. He doggedly clenched his teeth, and fixed his look on the opposite hedge; pressing his own hands to his side, and resolutely resisting every attempt that was made to examine his wound.

"Let un alone, if he 's so sulky, let him bide," said Bob, who owed the ranter an old grudge. "I 'm bound he have only got his desarts. He giv plenty o' tongue about my backsliding; but he do's the like himself, and backslides all the year round. Them saints can always find ice to do it on, winter or summer!"

"Tie that up, Bob," said the good-natured huntsman, "and do n't stand jawing at him when he 's bleeding. Speak up, old cock: you won't give it in, will ye? I know ye 're game, and you 'll soon get second-wind. Old Nick shan't crow over ye this turn. You shall give it him, beak and spur, for many a long day to come, and cut his comb for him, till he staggers, blind and groggy, about the pit, like a raw-head and bloody-bones!"

But even this appeal, although so admirably adapted to the character and calling of the ranter, could not extort a single syllable from the iron jaws of Uriah, who, like Cassio, was suffering at once under the smart of a body-wound, and the pang of an anticipated gash in his reputation. He was, therefore, not very solicitous that the fleshy hurt should be probed or pried into, lest it should lead to the detection of the other sore, and prudently

deferring speech, he applied the whole force of his mind to consider the best mode of warding off the questions and conjectures which his condition would be certain to excite. At first he thought of giving out, that Apollyon, weary of defeat in so many spiritual contests, had assaulted him in physical encounter; but as such a battle would only have obtained credence from his own followers, by whom he was already invested with the sanctity, and, as some old women affirmed, the visible halo of the old apostles, he resolved on framing some story which should throw the odium of the sanguinary deed on the infidel and the heathen, in which terms he included all those who did not take tickets or shares in his spiritual little-go, called Sion Chapel.

He had just made up his mind to this course, when, to his great delight, he hailed the appearance of his own tilt cart, which was used for the conveyance of soap, candles, saucepans, and other heterogeneous articles, to the houses of his customers; besides occasionally acting as a family carriage, when Uriah, his wife, and offspring, wished to attend a love-feast at some distant tabernacle, or the quarterly conference of the sect. It was driven by a slim, pale, tall pole of an apprentice, with an abundance of top and lop, as the foresters say, who had answered Uriah's advertisement for a serious youth, who could bear confinement six days in the week, with an express stipulation that he should attend chapel on the seventh; for, like our modern zealots and legislators, the ranter was not content that the Deity should receive his dues voluntarily, but he insisted that the divine revenue of homage and worship should pass through human hands, and be liable to a spiritual or worldly per centage, for its enforcement and collection, by self-constituted bailiffs and interested agents.

"Oh the holy!" exclaimed the driver of the tilt cart, as he saw his master and pastor bleeding by the road-side; "here 's a sight! the scoffer has turned a sticker and stabber; and the Evil One rejoiceth in the blood of the saints! Never mind, master, you 're a blessed martyr; never mind; bleed away, it 's all for glory! There 'll be miracles done with your skull, and wonders with your shin-bones!"

"Hold your tongue, you Balaam's ass! and bring the cart nearer," said Uriah, speaking at last, like Roger Bacon's brazen head; "I did n't bind you to me to preach and pray, but for to mind shop and drive the horse."

So saying, he uplifted his burly body, and, rejecting the assistance of Dick and Bob, began to stagger towards the tilt cart; but the serious apprentice hastily whipped on the horse some half-dozen paces, and began to explain to his master.

"The Lord forbid! I would n't have you get into it for the world. It 's chuck full o' goods, particularly hardware; and I would n't have your precious wounds fester'd and aggravated by cankerous brass candlesticks, and spouts of copper kettles; there a' n't so many saints upon earth as one can be spared. I 'll go and unload, and be back in the singing of a hymn."

"Stick as you be!" bellowed the ranter, and in a moment he was hanging at the back of the cart, where he had no sooner introduced his head under the tilt, than a female face bolted out at the front, enveloped in a huge straw hat, decorated with what a gardener would call a "remarkable fine blow" of ribands. A body followed, clad in pink muslin, with abundant flounces, and white cotton stockings, bound round the ankles with the yellow strings belonging to a pair of tarnished satin sandals. The young lady was handed from the shaft with more haste than gallantry, by the abashed Jediah, who jumped down after her, and, like a tethered lamb, stood as distant as a grasp of the long reins would allow him, to receive the rebuke of his principal.

"A Jezebel, a Jezebel!" roared the voice of Uriah, from the interior of

the cart, whilst the girl scudded off like a hare, provoking a merry so-ho from all the huntsmen.

"Truly," cried Jedediah, "the Wicked One has abused my senses. She seemed as modest a damsel as ever begged a lift, being bound to see a sick mother, and her feet blistered with long travel."

"Drive on!" growled the voice of the ranter; "drive home!" But the huntsmen interposed, and spoke in at the front of the cart. "Zounds, Uriah, put us on the scent a bit. Tell us how you got your hurt. Who did it?"

"A man — a man," answered Uriah, impatiently, his voice now getting weaker.

"Well, but tell us his markings, boy," said Dick, "and I 'll take him it he's within twenty mile, at kennel, or on the pad."

"Short — and stout made," said the ranter, hatching a lie circumstantial, "with a hard face — and a wicked eye — red hair — bandy legs."

"That will do," cried Dick. "Jump up, youngster, and drive him home steadily; and keep your sheep's eye to the road you 're going!"

"And do n't 'ee fall a courting th' ould parson by mistake," added Bob, from his saddle, "but gie thy sweetheart a smacking buss, like this here" — and he cracked his whip — "and tell her Bob sent it, with my sarvice to her sick mother, and a bottle of daffydowndilly. Ware hounds, tho'! — Zookers, Dick! — how that message do make him goo! Well, th' ould roarer is taken off his work, any how, for a month or two."

"Not he," said Dick, remounting, and getting under way with his hounds; "he 's no such chicken. The blood-letting will be as good to him as spring physic; and he 'll come out again as sleek in his coat, and as plump in his carcass, as the Squire's Suffolk Punch. But, look yonder, Bob, over the gate! — There 's a fellow skulking along the common, and making for the copse — see how low he runs, and bobs behind the bushes. Forrard, Jim, forrard, and ride home with the pack — and you, Bob, come along with me!"

In an instant the huntsman bounded over the gate, followed by the whip, and both were galloping over the field at their best pace, in a straight line towards the object of pursuit; and not unmarked by the fugitive, who redoubled his exertions to gain the wood, making desperate rushes through hedges, and extraordinary jumps over ditches, occasionally receiving a severe fall. As the horses had a deep, clayey, ploughed field to get over, with a wide brook, before they reached the common where the fellow was running, he had a tolerable chance of gaining the cover before they could come up; and every nerve of man and horse was strained to the uttermost. At last the pursuers reached the brook, the pursued having attained to within a hundred yards of the copse.

"Hark forrard!" shouted Dick, gallantly dashing into the water, the cry and the example being echoed by Bob, and, after floundering for a minute or two, both horsemen contrived to scramble up the opposite bank, but the delay in the stream had given an important increase of distance to the runner.

"We shall lose him, we shall, by Jove!" exclaimed Dick, ramming the spurs into the flanks of his hunter; he 's a bare fifty yards from the cover, and full of running!"

In fact, the man was making, at the top of his speed, for the sylvan sanctuary, in whose tangled labyrinths he might have dodged and eluded a dozen huntsmen: a minute's more running would have sufficed to bring him into its shadows, when suddenly he was seen to fall headlong, and although he rose again instantly, and attempted to proceed, it was only to be dashed prostrate again with greater violence than before. He was no sooner risen a second time to his feet, than a hand was at his collar.

"A splitting burst you've given us," said Dick. "Little Tomboy never looked for such a sweat this morning, when he curvetted out of the yard. We're all right, Bob; it's the rascal we got the slot of—shortish and stoutish, and hair reddish—baddish face, a cock eye, and bandy pins."

"He have an ugly murdering phiz of his own, have 'nt un?" replied the first whip. "I say fellow, what hast thee got to say for thyself?"

"To-day is Friday, is n't it?" inquired the captive, without raising his head, and he was answered in the affirmative.

"You need n't grip me so hard, then," said the man, with a tone of despondency. "My doom 's doomed. I would n't run a foot not if you was to give me a mile for law. It 's more nor I know how I ever came to try it on, for I never escaped nothing yet. Any body else would have run the common from end to end, without catching his foot in a wire. But that 's my luck!"

"As sure as ever I winded a fox," exclaimed Dick; "it 's Unlucky Joe!" for in the doleful face before him, scratched as it was, and bleeding, and plastered with clay, the huntsman had not recognised the unfortunate ex-postilion, who was clad moreover, or rather disguised, in a tattered smock-frock and an old pair of velveteen trowsers.

"Odd zookers!" cried Bob, "so it be! But, lord! how he have transmogrified! So you cotched your foot in a snare, eh, Joe? why there be a halter a-making, man, to go round thy neck."

"So you have taken, Joe, to pad the hoof," said the huntsman, "and borrow money at long dates? A fellow, as starvation poor and lean as you look, might do the likes for a bit of bread, and not deserve to swing for it neither; but dang it, man, how came you to try your killing-knife on the old Methodist?"

"Me!" said Joe, lifting up his eyes and hands in astonishment: but the habitual despair of the fatalist immediately returned upon him, with the conviction of the futility of any defence. It 's no use my saying anything. Here 's another black card turned up, and gallows is trumps!"

"Why you don't mean to confess, do you?" said the huntsman, in some surprise at a man's not attempting to get up a story, after he had run so stoutly to save his life.

"If I don't confess myself," said Joe, "somebody will confess for me; so, guilty or not guilty, it 's all one. Other people proves alibis; and if I had 'nt been here, I should have been somewhere else: but that 's my old chance. I know my fortune without a gipsy. As I 'm too poor to sleep anywhere's but in the open air, I can't be burnt in my bed; and as the sergeants won't list me, cause I 'm short, I shan't be shot; and as the press-gangs won't look at me, I ar' n't to be drowned; so hanging is likely enough, for I know I shan't die natural."

"Nay, Joe," said the huntsman, somewhat touched by the poor fellow's picture of his destitution, "every body has a chance. If you can, really, hold up an innocent hand, and say not guilty,"—

"Nobody ever believed me yet," answered Joe, "and it 's too late to try now. My dice always runs one way. Mayhap after I 'd danced my dance upon nothing, and been leg-pulled, and hung a full hour, and stroked all the old women's wens, there 'd come a reprieve on a lame post-horse; for that 's my luck."

"Phoo—phoo, man," said the huntsman, "that an't quite so sure to follow as a turnspit behind a hare."

"It has followed me ever since I was born," said the predestinarian, "and that was of a Friday. I 've never had a turn in life—never! Misfortune fights fair with other folks; but, as for me, I 'm kicked about arter I 'm down. I 'm hunted and haunted wherever I go—from village to village, and from town to town, with a curse sounding arter me, like a kettle at a

dog's tail. I 'm knowed everywhere for being unlucky at whatever I put hands to; and what signifies honesty, and soberness, and industry, with t' other character tacked along with it? I can't get charity, 'cause I look able to work; and I can't get work, 'cause I 'm reckoned unlucky, and I may as well be put out of my misery at once. I do n't mind dying, for I 'm sick of my days; and, if it please God Almighty to chuck down a handful of sudden deaths, you 'd see me scrambling after one, aye, as hard as ever a barefoot beggar boy for a copper out of a coach-window."

Seldom are the utterers of such sentiments so sincere as Unlucky Joe was, in this depreciation of existence: like a long-standing cup of tea, life generally grows sweeter and sweeter towards the bottom, and seems to be nothing less than syrup of sugar at the very last. The desponding, hopeless creed of the fatalist, however, was one especially calculated to sicken the heart and to sadden the soul, and to wean the owner from a world paved all over with black stones. According to an old astrological theorist, there are stars which ray forth darkness, as well as others that distribute light, and under some gloomy star of the former class, the unfortunate post-boy considered himself to have been born, and that he was doomed to walk in its shade to the end of his days. He saw nothing before him but a dreary prospect, done as it were in Indian ink, where he was to be perpetually haunted by a malignant demon, thwarting every honest endeavour, misdirecting every innocent aim, perverting every good intention, aggravating every unwary accident, and converting even the achievement of a given object into an untoward event. There are many believers in the same doctrine, for almost every man's existence affords some dark building-plot for the foundation, some period of accumulative inflictions, swelling each after the other like the inky waves, with a storm in the distance.

> "As if calamity had just begun:
> As if the vanward clouds of evil days
> Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
> Was with its stored thunder labouring up."

To pass from the graver to the minor concerns of life, no card-player exists, but must some time have endured, and wondered at a run of ill-luck, setting in with the inveterate steadiness of a monsoon, and all the consumptive deadliness of an east wind; as if Fortune were a real divinity, equally jealous and inexorable, and who, for some neglected sacrifice, had entailed this protracted and bitter expiation on her votary.

A slight sketch of the history of the decline and fall of Unlucky Joe, from the era of the death of Bedlamite, will show that his imputed evil genius had not been idle in the interim. He had been discharged by five successive post-masters, for falls and casualties, which had inflicted cuts, sprains, bruises, and fractures, on his own person. He had been rejected by the officers of the army, the navy, and the parish; he had been imprisoned for poaching, because he picked up a dead hare; discharged one King's Birthday, and committed the next morning for sleeping in the open air. He had been crossed in love by the only girl he had ever addressed; he had been made a father by a frail fair one he never saw; and, to conclude, he was in custody for a murderous act he had never contemplated; pennyless, friendless, and hopeless. In this abject state he gave up striving with his fate, and the superstition that had him enthralled in its web, immediately pounced upon him, and wound around him in a preliminary shroud, even as a spider serves a devoted fly, when the insect has ceased its struggles.

"It's no use preaching hope to me," he said: "my sentence is booked. You're as sure of the blood-money as if it was down on the nail. Such as t is, my life's worth forty pounds to some on ye; and my body will fetch

a trifle, besides, from the surgeons; so you may as well begin raffling for me at once. You can't keep my head above water. I'm overloaded; like the man a-swimming, that went down when a blue-bottle settled on his bald head. If I was to be hanged with a rotten thread it would n't break, for I know my luck!"

"Boddikins, man!" said the whipper-in, "what made ye take then to leg-bail? If people do want to put their necks out, his worship, Justice Rivers, have no objections to showing them the right line."

"I don't know why I run so," answered Joe; "but I see'd the hounds a-coming, and recollected about Bedlamite; and bolted, I do n't know why. I'm sure it warn't for my carcass; for, God help me, it 's as used to hard knocks as the gable end of the Bell, where they played at fives. Mayhap I did n't like to look Sir Mark in the face, for they said he fretted as much over the old gray as over his own brother. But come, lead on to the cage — for I know I 'm to be a jail-bird; and the sooner my neck is pulled the better, for such a poor doomed hunfortunate fellow as me!"

"To be sure," said Dick, "the killing poor Bedlamite was a mortal grievous job; and if I had knowed who I was chasing, I won't answer for it, that I would n't have galloped over you with Tomboy, and so let one horse revenge the t' other. As for sticking the methodist, a judge and a jury must pick that out, for it 's beyond my skill; and so you 're for Master Gregory's man-trap, jump up behind me, and let 's be jogging."

The prisoner, as desired, quietly mounted behind the huntsman; and no primitive quaker, with a similar prospect of martyrdom, ever went to the House of Bondage more calmly, meekly, and lamb-like, than Unlucky Joe

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLAUD. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.
BEN. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"The world is gone crazy and spins round contrary;
Madge would have Roger, and Roger loves Mary;
Peggy seeks Peter, and Peter sues Jenny,
Sis sighs for Colin, and Colin woos Winny,
Polly loves Diggon, and Diggon hates Polly,
Kate drowns for Simon, and he hangs for Dolly;
Sing hey! and sing ho! and all love is a folly!"

THE GREENE GARLANDE.

THE interview with the brown woman had a marked effect upon the Creole. He became reserved, thoughtful, gloomy, and irritable; though he subdued his temper before his uncle and cousins, and vented it elsewhere; for he was one of those that are civil to Richard, but rude to Dick; complaisant to Thomas, but snappish to Tom; polite and obliging to his superiors or equals, but harsh and imperious to his inferiors and dependants.

"Od, mem," said Tibbie, in answer to a question from her mistress as to what she thought of her nephews, "they 're just the weal o' the kintra. Yon Ringwood 's a bonnie callant, baith frank and free, aye daffin and lauchin, wi' a civil word for a' body; and his brither 's a douce, discreet, wise-like lad, and bonny forbye, and hauds weel till his beuk; but ou, mem, yon lad wi' the brown face they ca' the St. Kitts, is a thrawn body! An auld tyke couldna be mair cankert! I did but just speer at him — for ye see, mem, I was thinking, as he cam frae the Wast Indies, he wad ken aiblins aboot puir Sandie, for Sandie 's gane to some place wi' a B, Bermudies, or Barba-

dies, or Ben-coolin, whilk nae doot is a muckle mountain like Ben Lomond or Ben Nevis — sae ye see, mem, I did but just speer at him a word or twa aboot Sandie, for amang a' thae black creturs, and brown creturs, he 'd ken Sandy brawly —"

"I believe, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "my nephew, the Creole, is rather sensitive as to any allusions either to black or brown."

"Sensiteeve, mem!" exclaimed Tibbie, "he was just rampaugin! I canna mind the tae hauf o' the ill-names he ca'd me; but he bade me gang, my troth did he, intil the Dub o' Darkness."

The Scotchwoman, in truth, had stumbled upon the Creole in a moment of excitement, when he had just come from a skirmish of words with Ringwood; and the argument had ended as usual, namely, with a touch on the "bit of raw."

Smarting under the taunt, he determined to break through the brown woman's injunction, by seeking her out, and insisting on a disclosure of all that she knew with regard to his birth; and he had just ordered out his horse for the purpose, when he was invited, by a message, to accompany the family on a visit to Hawksley. He immediately complied, though reluctantly, but with a much better grace than Ringwood, who made a dozen excuses, which were overruled.

"Well," said the latter to Raby, "here 's another visit to Hawksley, I suppose my father is going too in the commission, and wants to learn the justice-work. How do you go?"

"In the carriage," answered Raby, "with my father and my aunt."

"And I may ride with St. Kitts," said Ringwood, "a pleasant compa nionship, considering we were at high words an hour ago. I 'll lay fifty to one, you do n't guess the subject of our dispute?"

"The beauty of the marriage service, maybe," said Raby, "or a few words in favour of banns and licenses."

"It ended in something of the sort," said Ringwood, "and so far you 're right. But it began about different kinds of beauty."

"A chivalrous subject truly," said Raby; "and of course each knight chose a fair lady for his paragon, and maintained the pre-eminence of her beauty in the tilt of tongues."

"Yes, a regular set-to!" replied Ringwood, "one stood up for Miss Rivers, and the other for Miss Twigg."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Raby, "what a comparison! And was St. Kitts so absurd as actually to set up as a model that animated Dutch doll, with great staring black eyes, ruddle cheeks, and a redder mouth, with an everlasting wooden smile, like a ship's figure-head?"

"No," said Ringwood, "St. Kitts did no such thing. I chose to back the Dutch doll myself."

"You, Ringwood!" exclaimed the brother, with unaffected surprise, "you set up that ogling, simpering, lisping, piece of affectation, in opposition to the artless, natural, Grace Rivers? But you were bantering him."

"I 'm not apt to banter," said Ringwood, in an offended tone. "When I speak, it 's always straightforward; and my words aim direct at my meaning, like bullets at a mark."

"So much the worse," said Raby. "I 'm sorry for it, for in such a question St. Kitts has you at a vantage. The whole world would give it against you."

"How do you know that?" said Ringwood; "is the whole world of one taste? Why, a dozen men can't agree about a dog! Ask the Squire which is the handsomest hound of the pack, and he will say Challenger; ask my father and he would name Hannibal; for my own part, I should give it to Brusher; while Dick swears by Grasper, and nothing else."

"True," replied Raby; "about such shades and degrees of beauty, every

man may differ from his neighbour. But when the question is mooted between a Venus by Phidias, and a statue by Tablet the stonemason; a Madonna by Correggio, and a Queen Bess on a tavern sign; a Dresden-china May-queen, and a common earthenware shepherdess — Oberon's mate, and Punch's wife —"

"Capitally matched," exclaimed Ringwood, "and no doubt would keep step well in harness. I know I'm not such a quiz as you are; but I have eyes in my head. I'm reckoned a fairish judge of the points of a horse; and if I can tell whether a nag has a good figure, I suppose I can see whether a girl's shapely; at all events, I can see the difference between Miss Twigg and a Dutch ship with a doll's head, though you have proved you can't."

"I am content," answered Raby, "that I can see the difference between Miss Twigg and Miss Rivers, which you are equally unable to appreciate."

"I know the difference between them," said Ringwood, "as well as you do; nobody said they were alike. But what has that to do with one's choice, any more than the fillies for the Oaks? One may be a bay and the other a gray, and they may both be favourites, and find backers for all that."

"True," said Raby, "and I have heard that the veriest jade of the race gets golden opinions from some simpleton or other, who deems her the paragon of symmetry."

"And I have heard," said Ringwood angrily, "of perfect Solomons for learning, that talk about Phidias and Venuses, being smit by the first bread-and-butter Miss from boarding-school that chose to set her cap at them."

"Ringwood," said Raby, speaking hastily, and reddening, "if you mean to liken the accomplished, elegant, and amiable Grace Rivers, to any such artificial coquette, I feel bound to say the degrading comparison does her gross injustice. If in face and figure you are too blind to discover the united charms of a Rosalind, an Imogen, or a Laura, at least in the excellence of her mind, and the virtues of her heart, you ought, if not lost to feeling, to sensibility —"

"Aye, there you are on your hind legs, in a moment;" interrupted Ringwood, "but did I get vicious and rear up, and lash out, when you degraded Miss Twigg into Mad Moll, and Moll Flanders, and Judy, and the devil knows what besides? But hark ye, Raby; fair play's a jewel. Everybody has a right to their own taste. You have yours and I have mine. And I'll lay odds the young ladies differ in their tastes as much as we do. The copies of verses that Miss Rivers is so fond of humming and strumming, Miss Twigg, maybe, would turn into curl-papers."

"I should never feel surprised," said Raby, sharply, "at any act of Vandalism from Miss Twigg; if she were even to tear leaves out of Spenser to put her hair in, and to try the heat of her tongs on the pages of Milton."

"Like enough," retorted Ringwood. "Nor should I die of wonder if I heard Miss Rivers singing half-penny ballads, or repeating Little Bo-peep."

"Except, that there is one circumstance," said Raby, "which makes assurance doubly sure to the contrary."

"And what is that," inquired Ringwood contemptuously, "which is to be such a safe hedge?"

"That she possesses," answered Raby, "all the sense you want; all the taste you are without; — and all the feelings for the beautiful that you think you have."

The colloquial pepper had been shaken out thus far, when, luckily, before the top of the castor could quite come off, the Baronet and Mrs. Hamilton appeared at the hall door, where the carriage was in waiting. Raby instantly descended the stairs, and followed his father and aunt into the

coach; while Ringwood mounted his horse, taking care to place the vehicle between the Creole and himself; and in this order they set forward.

None of the parties spoke till the carriage had gone about half down the avenue, when the Baronet, after a long look at Raby's flushed cheek, which made the colour still deeper, thus addressed him.

"Mayhap you think, Raby, that I do n't know what 's afoot; but an old fox-hunter like me knows which way the game goes, by signs other men would n't dream of, such as crows flying, and jays chattering, and sheep huddling, and so forth. I mean to say, that Ringwood and St. Kitts have n't put the coach between them for nothing, and there 's a bit of a flush in your face that tells me you know what the bone was that led to the barking and biting."

"My dear father," answered Raby, "your hunting experience served you truly: there has indeed been a difference, but I assure you it was quite trivial, between Ringwood and St. Kitts: and subsequently, as you always require the whole truth, between Ringwood and myself."

"Aye there it is," said the Baronet, with a mournful tone and a sorrowful shake of his head, "one down and t' other come on: no two of you can agree. I wish to God you 'd be more united, as the father said in the fable, when he showed his sons the bundle of sticks. Stand by one another, and you are strong; but quarrel and split, and you are weak and good for nothing. Look at backgammon, where two men together are a defence and help to each other; but when they are single, they are nothing but blots, and liable to be taken up at every throw of the dice, and obliged to try back. Book that for as long as you live. And now what was the wrangle about!"

"A mere matter of taste," replied Raby; "the relative claims of Miss Twigg and Miss Rivers to the palm of beauty."

"I should have thought, Raby," said Mrs. Hamilton smiling, "that there could be no dispute on that question; but logic is taught at Oxford; and I suppose some one of you was ambitious to show his skill in defending a daring proposition."

"If it was only logic-chopping," said the Baronet, "I should n't mind. I 've no more objection to a bout at argument than to a bout at single-stick; only the players ought n't to lose their tempers. But it might be earnest after all. Miss Twigg 's a smartish girl, with lively black eyes, and pouting lips, and so forth, and a spanking figure, with good action to boot, and might get a stride or two before Grace in the Creole's fancy; those West Indians do n't think as we do."

"St. Kitts was Grace's champion," replied Raby.

"The devil he was!" ejaculated the Baronet. "Why this beats cock-fighting! They say, Kate, there 's no accounting for tastes, and in fancy matters I believe like does not always pair with like; but think of Raby here, bookish and poetical and sentimental and so forth, and that always rides a pony or a galloway, standing up for a slapping, bouncing, high-couraged girl, that looks only half broke, like Miss Twigg."

"My dear aunt," said Raby, eagerly, "pray think of no such incongruity. It was Ringwood who found a goddess at the Hive, and set her on a pedestal above Grace and her three namesakes."

The speaker intended no wound; but his words pierced Sir Mark with the pang of a gaunch from a wild boar, or a gore from a stag at bay. His first impulse was towards the checkstring and the carriage window, that he might call the refractory admirer to task; but the presence of his sister put him in mind of her admonition, and he remained passive. In the mean time it gave him some consolation to reflect whither they were going, and on the irresistible attractions of his first favourite, whose portrait his imagination painted in the most glowing colours; and then he amused himself

in bedaubing and disfiguring the full-length he had lately drawn of Miss Twigg, till, like the ideal lady in the Rivals, "she had a hump on each shoulder, a skin like a mummy, a beard like a Jew, was as crooked as a crescent, and rolled her one eye like the bull in Cox's museum." He then mentally held up the two pictures for comparison, in the very spirit of Hamlet, and wondered utterly how his son and heir could hesitate with such a choice. "It 's impossible, I know," he said to himself, "to put old heads on young shoulders, but the head of a two-year old ought to know which to choose. Why there 's young Twigg would jump at Grace, for I saw him throwing the eyes of a whole flock of sheep at her; and so would Raby or St. Kitts; but Ringwood, though he has father's consent and every thing, turns away from her, confound him, like musty hay.

There is a saying, which imputes to dogs in general a disposition to fall on and bite one that is bitten; and Sir Mark seemed placed in the very situation of the unfortunate cur. In glancing occasionally through the carriage window his eye had observed some object that the Creole carried before him on the saddle, and which he at length made out to be a beautiful small spaniel of the Blenheim breed. His curiosity being excited, he took an opportunity of letting down the window and asking St. Kitts where the little animal was going, and he was informed that it was destined for a present to Grace Rivers. The answer made Raby smile; but it gave a fresh pang to the Baronet, and reflecting that Ringwood carried no spaniels to Hawksley, he pulled up the window again, with a suddenness that threatened to demolish the glass.

To Mrs. Hamilton, who had been the depository of her brother's matrimonial schemes, his movements were no mystery; but she was restrained by the presence of Raby, and did not venture on any remark. The Baronet was not in a humour for talking, and Raby was soon occupied in speculations of his own; so that the three insides travelled on to their destination as mute as three strange reserved English passengers by a mail, who have never met before and may never meet again, and besides have locked up their tongues in their travelling bags, which are in the hind-boot.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOBBINOL.—Diggon Davie, I bid her good day;
Or Diggon her is, or I mis-say.
DIGGON.—Her was her while it was daylight,
But now her is a most wretched wight;
For day that was is wightly past,
And now at last the dirk night doth haste.

SPENSER'S SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

"For my part, I know not whether is best, to live thus or die out of hand; my soul chooseth strangling rather than life, and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon

CHRISTIAN, IN THE CASTLE OF DESPAIR.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.

WORDSWORTH.

THE representative of justice, as does not always happen with Justice herself, was at home to those who inquired for him. He had just begun to lunch in company with Grace; and by way of economizing time, was listening to a report of his clerk on the Hazel Bridge evidence, when the

visiters were announced and introduced. The usual greetings were exchanged, but the Baronet, who kept a wary eye on Ringwood, remarked, with displeasure, that he quitted Grace after a very brief salutation, and was soon in close conversation with the magistrate's clerk, Nick Ferrers, a noted cocker, who, in the true spirit of the law, liked to see two game clients pitted against each other, and shedding their blood and feathers for any body's benefit but their own.

The Creole next approached the young lady, and after a few compliments he introduced to her the little spaniel. "He is, I assure you, Miss Rivers, one of the true Blenheim breed, for I procured him myself of the Duke's keeper. He is really a pretty fellow, and deserves to be a lady's dog, if you will honour me by taking him into your service.

"I am really sorry," said Grace, blushing, and looking confused, "that you should have taken the trouble, not that I shall feel less grateful for the kindness of the intention, but Raby was so good as to send me one of the same breed from Oxford, a month ago, and the little creature has become attached to me, and is a great favourite."

"It is like my luck, as Unlucky Joe would say," replied the Creole with a constrained smile. "It consoles me, however, to reflect that as Raby and I have jumped so in our ideas, we must be reckoned fellow-wits."

"He is really a beauty," exclaimed Grace, lifting up the small curly creature, and placing him in the chair next her own, where she patted and fondled him; but on the approach of Raby, the beauty was suffered to jump down, and the new-comer took possession of the vacant seat, while the Creole turned away and bit his lip.

"Well, neighbour," said Sir Mark, addressing himself to the Justice, "to turn back to our old topic, how goes on the car of Juggernaut — does it load well as usual ?"

"It is going at its old rate," answered the Justice, "and I may say, with regard to my own share of its road, the whip is seldom out of my hand. The Hazel Bridge business is scarcely disposed of, when another case of cutting and maiming, with intent to commit murder, demands my investigation. I really think the public are not aware that, to secure the peace and safety they sleep in, a magistrate must devote so much of his time, and sacrifice so much of his rest as I do: but justice, which never sleeps, demands a vigilant minister. You have heard, I presume, from popular rumour, that Uriah Bundy, the ranter, and proprietor of the emporium, was stopped and stabbed, at mid-day, by a foot-pad who is now in custody !"

"To be sure I have," answered the Baronet; "it was my huntsman that took him, and Dick told me the whole particulars. It's the same fellow that killed Bedlamite, Unlucky Joe, as he's called, and, as I have a score to clear with him too, I would take it kind of your worship to let me be present at his examination, that, if he clear himself of one murder, I may let slip at him with the other."

"With all my heart," said the magistrate, secretly pleased with an opportunity of having a Matthews-like "At Home," and performing the characters of Solon, Draco, Brutus, and Judge Jeffries, to a select audience. "The prisoner," he continued, "is below, in charge of Gregory, the head constable, and the prosecutor is in attendance in my study. If it be agreeable, therefore, we will transform the drawing-room, for once, into a *Lit de Justice*, and take the evidence. I assure you, Mrs. Hamilton, you will find it an interesting case, and presenting a moral phenomenon perfectly new to me in all my magisterial experience; I mean the remarkable indifference of the accused party, as to penal consequences, or rather, I should say, a kind of hankering to incur the extreme penalty of the law."

"Why, really, Sir," answered Mrs. Hamilton, "I have so much of the

curiosity of my sex, that I should like to see the culprit, and to hear what reasons he could assign for so very extraordinary a taste."

"And, for my part," said Grace, "I am curious to behold Unlucky Joe, who has been described to me as the mere foot-ball of fortune."

"So be it, then," said the Justice, "Mr. Ferrers, go and bring hither our tools of trade, and tell Gregory to produce his prisoner in court."

The clerk accordingly fetched his writing materials, and installed himself at the table fronting the Justice, who seated himself with much dignity in a large easy chair. In a few minutes the constable introduced his charge, who stared with a vacant careless gaze at the company, but the moment his eyes encountered the Baronet, his face twitched all over, and muttering a reflection on "his luck," he dropped his head, and kept looking downwards, as if for the bolt that was to be drawn beneath his feet. The oath was recited by the clerk, and Joe kissed the book.

"Prisoner, what is your name?" asked the Justice, in a tone which he reserved for the chair and the bench.

"Joseph Spiller," answered the culprit, "and I wish I 'd never been born to be baptized."

"How do you get your livelihood?" inquired the same stern voice.

"I was a post-boy aforetimes," said Joe, "but now I'm nothing, and nobody suffers from my misfortunes but myself."

"Now then," said the magistrate, with a manner meant to be particularly impressive, "now then, Joseph Spiller, — and remember you are on your solemn oath, — pray tax your memory, and inform us how you were employed during the morning of Friday, the 21st."

"Starving," was the brief answer, and it thrilled every heart in the room, except those of the Justice and his cock-fighting clerk; even the constable winked as if something had been blown into his eyes. The Justice noticed the sensation it had caused, and turning round in his chair, addressed himself to the Baronet.

"Sir Mark, the reply we have just heard is one of those artful touches which even the illiterate know how to introduce as skilfully as our best orators, when they would appeal to the tenderness, or rather weakness, of human nature. It is thus that they frequently excite a spurious sympathy in the minds of their hearers, and particularly females," — here he glanced at Mrs. Hamilton and Grace, "which is injurious to the due course of justice, and consequently to the interests of society. I say this, merely to put you upon your guard, that you may steel your feelings as I do, and not unsuspectingly lay your sensibility open to be lacerated by what my experience enables me to designate as mere coups de theatre."

"And now, fellow," he resumed to Unlucky Joe, "you stand here charged with stabbing with a knife, or some sharp instrument, one Uriah Bundy, with an intent to kill, a capital felony, whether the murder was consummated or not, and punishable with hanging. What have you to say for yourself?"

"I 've no wish to say any thing, not one word," answered Joe, with the serenity of a captive Indian warrior when brought to the stake. "I was born to mischances, and this is one. My life an't worth caring for; and if you hang me, it 's only taking the sin of it off my own hands, for it 's been in my thoughts afore now. I was cut down my last birth-day."

"By Jove, he 's in earnest though," said Sir Mark, in an under-tone to the Justice. "If he swaggered and shook his fist at death, and made faces at him, like a stage-player, I should know my customer; but he 's cool and quiet like a man when his mind 's made up. Take my word for it, he 'll die game!"

"Dogged, Sir Mark, dogged," replied the magistrate in an aside. "A sure sign of guilt; he knows it will be brought home to him."

"In the name of heaven, Joe," exclaimed the Baronet, "speak up! Make a start for your life at any rate; you can but be run into at the end." But the unlucky one only gave a rueful look at the speaker, and remained silent.

"He has got a defence about him, Sir Mark," observed the clerk, "but it don't crow. They all have a something or other to show fight with; but he knows his cock is over-weighted, and does not care to take it out of the bag."

"Gregory, bring in Uriah," said the magistrate, "and let him be confronted with the prisoner."

The constable disappeared, and in a few minutes came back with the ranter, whose appearance caused an involuntary start from both ladies, for in face and figure he looked the character of a murderer infinitely better than the forlorn, wo-begone, dispirited being who read the part. His countenance, indeed, was more grim than usual: his bushy brow was more darkly knit, his jaw more firmly set, and his eyes, with a sinister expression of dislike and distrust, settled in turn upon each of the company. He had entered on a course of deceit, in which he felt compelled to persevere; and he had made himself up, mentally and bodily, not to be betrayed by word or look.

"Ferrers, give Mr. Bundy a chair," said the magistrate, "and administer the oath." The form was gone through, and the justice resumed, "Now, Sir, take a good look at that fellow, and tell us whether you have ever seen him before."

"It's possible as I have, and maybe I have not," replied the ranter. 'In his outward man he looks like a reprobate that was about the neighbourhood some years ago; one that hired himself for lucre to the Enemy to ride post-horses on the Sabbath-day, and who was rebuked for the same by many special judgments, in the way of oversets, and stumbles, and falls."

"The very same — Joseph Spiller, alias Unlucky Joe," said the Justice, "your identification is perfectly correct. You recognise him then as the man who stopped you and inflicted the wound?"

"It is hard to say," replied the ranter, with a look upwards; "I always walks in the fear of the Lord, and not in the fear of man, so that the blow comed afore I was awares."

"Your worship," said the clerk, "the huntsman swears in his deposition that the said Uriah Bundy described the assailant as shortish and stoutish, and reddish hair, with a squint, and bandy legs; a description which in all its particulars tallies so exactly with the person of the prisoner, that coupled with the narrative of his flight and capture from the same document, it forms strong presumptive evidence of his guilt."

"I am of the same opinion, Ferrers," said the magistrate, "and should not hesitate to commit him at once for trial; but a few questions further may possibly afford stronger proof, by establishing the *animus*. I presume, Mr. Bundy, you are not aware of any ill blood between you which might prompt the accused to attack your life?"

"The Lord knows," answered Uriah, "it is not in my powers to search man through his heart and reins. To be sure I've been persecuted like the rest of the blessed saints because I scarify people with pitch and brimstone It's the ways of the infidels to return evil for good."

"You conceive, then," said the Justice, "that the prisoner put you in bodily peril in revenge of your attempts for his spiritual welfare?"

"The lofty have heard my voice on the mountain tops," said Uriah, "and so have the lowly down in the valleys. I don't go about preaching on stilts with pudding sleeves and a curricle hat; even this poor sinful worm have I stooped down to. Yes," he added, shaking his fist at poor Joe, "many's

the good track you've had along with your penn'worths of tobacco, and many a word in season, to save your being smoked yourself in the devil's pipe. But it fell among tares! Out upon you, reprobate! look what's come of your profane scoffing and scorning. Beelzebub has got you in his claws, and I hear him a-swearing and a-growling over you, like our black tom-cat with a mouse."

"Mr. Ferrers," said the magistrate, "I am satisfied of the malice prepense. You may fill up a mittimus, and, in the mean time, I will hear the accused, if he wishes to speak. Joseph Spiller, have you anything further to urge?"

"Nothing," answered Joe. "I knew it would go hard with me, and nothing else — not that I vally my life — I would n't sky a copper for it with Jack Ketch himself. If I was let off for murder, I should be drawed and quartered some day for high treason, for I'm a marked man. — Nothing can't save me!"

"Oh, the wicked heathen!" shouted the ranter, jumping up from his chair, and flourishing his arms. "He do n't believe in the saving power of grace. But I 'll tackle him — I 'll thrash the old man out of him, and he shall be born again!"

"I wish I could!" exclaimed Joe, who, like a great modern violinist, played wonderfully on one string; "but that 's unpossible;" and he dropped his desponding head in its old position.

"What 's impossible, you wretched Pagan?" exclaimed the ranter, his voice rising from a gale to a hurricane; "what 's impossible?" — but he suddenly stopped, and turned, with a look of alarm, towards the door, while the sound of persons in contention rose higher and higher.

"Slave, stand back," exclaimed a voice more imperious than the rest: the door burst open, and the brown woman entered, and walked straight up to the table of justice. Of course such an unexpected apparition struck the whole assembly with amazement. The constable, inspired by his old awe, involuntarily retreated behind the magisterial chair; the clerk jumped to his feet, clutching his pen-knife; and the Justice himself gave unequivocal signs of perturbation. The heart of St. Kitts beat thick; but, above all, her appearance terrified the gigantic ranter. His cheek blanched, as though her knife had drunk what remained of his life-blood, and he was obliged to support himself on the back of a chair.

"Aye!" she said, riveting her dark eyes on the Justice; "you may well wonder to see me again, of my own accord, under a roof where I once had such a sorry welcome. But I do not come to tax its hospitality for bread and water and stripes. — My errand is to do justice, which does not reside here, though the name is on the door!"

"Woman," said the magistrate, in a tone which showed that he had assumed the black cap, "your present outrageous conduct assures me that the past punishment was but an earnest of worse penalties to come. I know my duty, and will not shrink from it at the menace of a violent woman. Come before me again on the same charge, and my sentence shall send you to the same bridewell. But God forbid that the meanest should be denied a hearing, in due time and place, so stand back, and when the present case is disposed of you may speak."

"It is my pleasure to speak now," said the woman; "the proper place and the due season are better known to me than to yourself. Listen, then, for the sentence becomes my mouth better than yours. Release that poor destitute creature, who has no more blood on his hands than in his cheeks!"

"Woman, you are raving," said the Justice; "what would you have — that I should discharge a common assassin?"

"I have been mad," answered the woman, "and may be mad again; But I am not mad now. If murder was attempted, it was by my hand, and

this was the weapon." So saying, she drew forth the knife and held it aloft, her black eyes flashing, and her lip curling in scornful triumph, like a second Judith, exulting in the slaying of another Holofernes. "Yes," she continued, "faded as this face is, and this form disfigured by mean apparel, even these poor remains of what was once called beauty, could tempt the violence of a ruffian! Is the tale true, or not?" she cried, turning round suddenly upon Uriah, with the glare of a tigress. "Perjure your soul if you dare!"

Although thus frightfully adjured, the habitual courage of the ranter did not forsake him. "Away, woman," he shouted, "away with you! the Devil is the father of lies, and you are their mother! — you 've a whole family of 'em — great grown-up lies, and little lies, and lies as can just go alone,— and this here is one. Here 's a Sapphira come among us — a Sapphira, to swear and to forswear, and bear false witness — and I wonder she do n't drop down stone dead! — Oh, lying — lying, of all sins I cannot abide lying — it turns me inside out! — She or me must leave the room!"

"Peace then, and dread your own voice," said the woman, "and as you are so devoted to truth, listen to mine."

"Mr. Bundy," said the magistrate, "let her say her say, uninterruptedly, and you shall have the same privilege of reply."

"I know my innocence," said the ranter, "and the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. I 'm in pain, carnal bodily pain. One of us must not tarry. Dead corpses will fall a-bleeding when the murderer comes nigh 'em, and wounds will begin aching, when them are standing by as give them. Ever since that woman 's been here, I 've had a gnawing at my side like raging mad dogs!"

"O you shallow hypocrite!" exclaimed the woman, with unutterable scorn. "Behold the perjured liar convicted out of his own mouth! He swore it was a man that stabbed him!"

"As sure," said the clerk, "as a cock 's not a hen. That spur touched him in the right place, he can never go in again!"

"Egad!" said Sir Mark, "it 's all out of him. He rose well at her fence; but she had a deep ditch for him on the other side."

"I think we have a clear case of perjury," said the Justice, "whatever may become of the attempt to murder."

"I 'd give a guinea," exclaimed Ringwood, "the Squire had been here! It beats badger-drawing."

The ranter had drawn himself up to his full height; and, like a lion at bay, turned his shaggy head from one speaker to another, as if estimating his own powers to cope with them all, and deciding where to make his first spring. But the odds were against him. Lion-like as he seemed, he was confronted by a being as wild, as fierce, and as daring as himself, and whose calm smile expressed hate quite as fearfully as the savage grin to which it replied. He turned from her with a growl, and then, looking round the room, bellowed out a general curse, waving his arms abroad, as if to assist in the distribution of the malediction.

"You 'll all be consumed — all on ye! — and if I stays here I shall be consumed along with ye!" — whereupon he bolted through the door, and his powerful harsh voice was heard muttering far, far away into the distance.

"Let him go, Gregory," — said the Justice to the constable, who put himself in motion as soon as the ranter was fairly out of hearing; "let him go. There are such things as warrants in case of need. As for this fellow, he is discharged; and I feel bound to say without a blot upon his character."

"And the woman," inquired the clerk, "is she to be at walk or in the coop?"

"Committed," said the magistrate, assuming his Brutus look, and a severe tone worthy of the look. "Committed, were she my own sister. I have yet to consider whether a nameless stroller, of questionable means and notorious violence, should be let loose on society, armed with an illegal weapon, to the terror of his Majesty's liege subjects."

"Liege cowards!" said the woman. "Am I responsible for the fears of the dastardly? Is it wonderful that a lone female, like me, and a wanderer, with no more strength than belongs to her sex, should desire the protection of something more formidable than her own weak arm? The ruffianly blood, still crusting the blade, ought to be my apology!"

"The strong arm of the law will shield you," said the Justice; "but at the same time it shall protect the peaceable from your violence. You are committed."

"Upon what charge?" said the clerk, looking up.

"Under the Vagrancy Act," said the justice: unless she will now condescend to inform me of her name, her place of residence, and her means of living."

"Ask me those questions," said the woman, "when we are more in circumstances of equality. Ask me apart from your myrmidons, in the middle of some wide barren waste, where no human beings are visible but ourselves; or at dead of night in some lonely ruin; and I will tell you that I have the same natural privileges as yourself: the same right to live where I will, or how I will, to starve on wild herbs and berries in preference to a menial's pittance, and to sleep under the bare cope of heaven rather than the roof of a poor-house. Call me to account in some such spot, and attempt, if you dare, to control my choice. The liberty which God gave me, man shall not wrest from me. Lay but one finger upon me, in compulsion, and like other tyrants your soul shall startle at the outcry of 'war to the knife!'"

"A pretty doctrine truly," replied the magistrate, very coolly, "to come from the lips of one who, from her complexion, was born and bred in some land of slaves."

"Aye, you are right," said the woman; "but *there* I was the ruler and not the ruled; I was the mistress and not the slave: a look hinted my will; a word expressed it; and if needful, the whip enforced it. And am I come hither to endure dictation — to have my motives scrutinized — my wishes disputed — my acts condemned — to be ordered" — here her eyes flashed fearfully, "instead of ordering the lash?"

"By combs and spurs," said the clerk, "she has more game in her than ever I saw; if she was a hen, her eggs would be worth their weight in gold — regular Mother Goose's!"

"I always held to it," said Sir Mark, twitching the Justice's sleeve, "she was well-bred — the blood some tiptop planter or nabob. Every master must hunt his own as he likes, but in ours we always whip off with a vixen."

"Justice demands example," said the stern magistrate, involuntarily looking on the opposite wall for the picture of the Roman Judgment; and in no case can the warning be more salutary than when the vengeance of the law falls on a head exalted above the multitude. The lightning of heaven selects the tallest trees to strike upon, and so should the bolts of justice. Woman, you have obviously received the blessings of education, and have not therefore the vulgar plea of ignorance of your social duties. You have been intrusted with the rule over others, and thereby must be held cognizant of what is proper for your own guidance; you have confessedly occupied a rank of life and a degree of affluence which throw the more suspicion on the mysterious anonymous character and the equivocal mode of life you think proper to adopt. I have a painful but imperious duty to fulfil. Master Gregory," he was going to add, "do your duty;" but as

he made an appropriate gesture of authority, his arm was arrested by a tremulous hand, while, in the person of his daughter,

> "Dejected Pity by his side
> Her soul-subduing voice applied."

"For the love of mercy," said Grace, "if you would have me smile, or sing, or sleep in peace for a twelvemonth to come, do not commit her. Let the poor wretch go free!"

"Wretch!" echoed the woman, and she turned a look on the speaker that almost petrified her: "Wretch! — I am wretched, indeed, and have born with hard names from the aged and cold-hearted; but from the young, and gentle, and beautiful — for I was once their mate — such titles come like the deadly bite of the galli-wasp, that leaves its broken teeth in the wound. Yes, lovely as you are, I was once deemed as lovely, though not so fair in my skin. These bare arms have circled with gold and gems — this neglected hair has sparkled with diamonds, and this ill-clad figure has been decked with the choicest silks of the loom! In my own island I was loved and adored, young lady, as much as you can be in this; — and, if ever your young ear has been addressed with the titles of man's idolatry, from mere women up to angel, know that all those terms of admiration and fondness have been lavished on me. But the cane has been crushed," she added with a sigh; "its sweetness is gone, and I am nothing now but trash, for the trash-house!"

"Indeed, you must let her go," said Grace, hanging on her parent. "You must grant this request as though it were my last!"

"And in gallantry, Sir," said Mrs. Hamilton, "you must grant me the same request, being my first;" but, before the Justice could reply, the woman made out her own discharge as characteristically as her entrance.

"I have made a longer visit than strict politeness would warrant," she said, with the air and dignity of a duchess of the court of Louis XIV.: "but my concern for an unfortunate criminal must be my excuse. No compliments, I beg. I will depart, as I came, without ceremony. Positively I will have no attendance; not even to the door of the room;" and, with a significant but graceful wave of the knife, she retired, curtseying, leaving the whole assembly staring at each other, in a paroxysm of amazement.

The constable was the first to speak. "Come, Master Joe," he said, "don't stand a-pulling a long face, as if you was in the cart with Jack Ketch. Budge, man, budge; you 're let off, his worship says."

"Your worship, if it's all the same," said Joe, addressing the Justice, "I don't want my discharge. As the woman's bolted, I don't mind goin to prison in lieu on her. It will be bed, board, and lodging, any hows; and that 's more than I can get outside."

"No, no, Joe," said the Baronet, "keep out of jail. As the Squire called to me when I was going at the Willow Brook, you won't like it when you're in. Hark ye, Joe: I did mean to give you a rating about Bedlamite, but it has been done for me, for a heavy hand has been lain on you ever since. Only never take charge of a hunter again."

"Not for a purse of guineas," exclaimed Joe; "there would be the same end on it. If there was a gravel-pit within fifty miles, he 'd break his neck in it."

"There, then, take that," said the Baronet, tossing him a piece of gold; "go and get a good feed or two, and when you 're in better condition, look out for a job of work."

"The Almighty bless you, Sir Mark," ejaculated Joe, "and prosper you, and send you good luck, and that 's saying everything. It looks like a turn," he continued, gazing at the coin in his open hand, "if I don 't lose it or get choused out on it, which is all on the cards. But as for getting

work when the money's gone, there's no chance on it. The last place I got, I was turned out in half an hour — but I looked for something of the sort."

"For some delinquency of course?" said the magistrate.

"It was my ill luck," said Joe, "as got me warning. I was took on at the powder mills, but the men riz agin me, and would n't work along with me, 'cause I was sure to make a blow up. From there I went to Lord Thingembob's as wanted a hermit to live on his grounds."

"Well," said the magistrate, "there were no fellow-workmen to object to you there."

"No, your worship," answered Joe, "but I knew afore I applied there'd be somethin agin me; and so up came my want o' larnin. For just arter I was born, the charity school was put into chancery, and I wus growed up afore it got out agin, and that's been a bar to me through life. Howsomever, the guinea will keep me a while longer from a brickbat at my neck, or my own garter, and a crowner over my body, for that's as sartin as if I felt him sittin on it. It ar'n't for nothin I've got sich a nickname as Unlucky Joe."

With this gloomy foreboding, Fortune's poor victim took his leave; and, like Christian, resumed his burthensome journey of life, hung all over with the slime and mud of the Slough of Despond.

"Egad!" said Sir Mark, "he's likely enough to trouble old Stubbs and a dozen more, to find why his body's swelled up, like a cow's after clover, or his cheeks are purple, and his eyes staring out of his head. I never yet saw a man recover who gave himself up so. I remember a gentleman with a gig-shaft through his body, promising his friends he would get over it, and so he did: and another fellow with only a few scratches and bruises, declared himself a dead one, and so it came off. There are many sorts of deaths for Joe, but it's *felo de se* against the field; and particularly if the methodist parson would take him into training. I don't know anything more likely than ranters and canters to make one sick of the world!"

"You are acquainted with Uriah, then?" asked the Justice.

"To be sure I am," said the Baronet: "he is fond of coming to the meets of the Hunt, and attacks every man in scarlet as he would the Scarlet Lady herself. Many's the time he has turned me down to Satan, and Beelzebub, and Belial, and Apollyon — but I can't go through half the names of his pack. I verily believe some day I shall horsewhip him. Nobody respects religion more than I do, or goes more regularly to church; — but these fellows, confound 'em! are not content with setting up toll-gates in the road to heaven, but they must be as extorting and as insolent as turnpike men to boot!"

"You should hear the Squire," said Ringwood, "he is the reverse of talkative; but when he meets the ranter he lets loose in earnest. I expect sometimes they will set-to like Broughton and Slack."

"It would be six to four on Uriah," said the Baronet, "and no takers. Ned is a light-weight, and the ranter is a big one. What say ye, Kate?"

"Indeed, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Hamilton, "it would be like Jack the Giant-Killer fighting Galligantus. I never saw a human being so frightfully resembling an ogre as the ranter. He looks, while saving sinners' souls, as if he longed to eat their bodies. I have heard from my childhood of Bogie, but I was never introduced to him before."

"And for my part," said Grace, "I have read of Fates, and Furies, and Amazons, but till this morning they were reckoned among ancient fictions. I shall dream of that gipsy queen for a month to come."

"It's a thousand pities," said Sir Mark; "but I quite forgot her skill in palmistry. You ought, Grace, to have shown her that little white hand of yours; and Ringwood should have had his fortune told at the same time —

and Raby too. I will not pretend to say how it is done; but she certainly can see the other side of the hedge. You should have heard her with my nephew when she told him — but what is become of St. Kitt's?"

"Stole away, a few minutes after the brown woman," replied Ringwood, "and by this time he is, may be, taking turn about with Unlucky Joe in learning his doom beforehand."

The Creole had actually withdrawn himself as his cousin described. During the woman's presence he had watched for some secret sign of recognition, or hint of an assignation; but his expectation ended in disappointment, for he could not even catch her eye. Her injunction was forgotten. The approaching term reminded him of the painful probability of returning to college with the question which lay nearest to his heart still unsolved; and he determined at all hazards to follow her, and to ascertain finally whether the obnoxious reproach of his birth was to be cured or to be endured. Trusting, therefore, to his own invention for an excuse afterwards, he slipped quietly out of the room, and leaving the company to their own conjectures as to his absence, set forth in pursuit of the wanderer. Possibly the latter anticipated this course; for she studiously chose the most unfrequented lanes and by-ways, and it was finally in the loneliest and dreariest spot of the neighbourhood that the Creole, like Saul, held communion with his Witch of Endor.

CHAPTER XXV.

You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me: Pray you
(Since doubting things go ill, often hurts more
Than to be sure they do: for certainties
Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,
The remedy then born) discover to me
What both you spur and stop.

CYMBELINE.

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet,
I as a child will go by thy direction.

RICHARD III.

"You have ill obeyed my command, Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, as she seated herself on a log by the way-side: "I bade you not seek me; and as the first and only injunction I ever laid on you, it deserved more respect."

"You should have told me all then, or nothing," said the Creole: "it was your own pleasure to invoke my curiosity, and you must lay the spirit you have called up."

"Sit down then beside me," said the woman, "and give me your hand."

"Pshaw! that's a mummery," said the Creole impatiently. "What I desire to know concerns the past rather than the future, so you may spare your palmistry."

"My thoughts glance backwards, as well as yours," said the woman; 'and have as little to do with palmistry. Tell me, Walter Tyrrel, is it becoming that I and my child, my foster-child, should meet without a greeting? If I claimed an embrace even, it might be my due."

"There it is, then," said the Creole, extending his hand to her, which she covered with kisses — "I am a poor fond woman, and my doting memory will fly back to the time when you hung smiling on my bosom, or lay sleeping on my knees."

"Enough of the nursery," said the Creole, "I seek not to know where or how I slept, or what childish ditty served for my lullaby."

"Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, solemnly, "scorn not my love. You may live, like me, to lament the dearth of it. Aye, at this very moment, reckon up the hearts that are devoted to your interest; and can you poll so many, that mine is to be despised? Shall I set down your cousins for two?"

"Yes," said the Creole, bitterly, "but with a tick against each name, to mark them as doubtful votes."

"And what is your own feeling towards your kinsmen?" asked the woman.

"I fear but a neutral one," said the Creole: "it seems to occupy a debateable land between love and hatred, and to make occasional incursions into either territory."

"You must *hate* them," said the woman, vehemently, and with the guttural utterance of the very passion she inculcated. "You must hate them mortally — as I do! There are some persons who profess to repay evil with good, to render kindness for unkindness; but that is no creed of mine. I return scorn for scorn — wrong for wrong — blow for blow, — and the being that reproached me with my birth, should have cause to rue his own."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Creole, with a start, as if she had touched him with another weapon, "how came you to know that taunt?"

"I have ears," answered the woman, "and I have eyes: and if I sometimes play the eavesdropper and the spy, it is to prosper the last wish, the last hope, the last blessing I possess on earth. I have heard that taunt uttered; and have seen it wring you like the sting of the scorpion; and well it may!"

"It is true, then," said the Creole, in a tone of despondency, "and I must put up with the reproach."

"It is false," said the woman, "and the scoff must be avenged. Your parents were united in wedlock — holy wedlock as it is called — and, for as much as it is worth, you are legitimate."

"Thanks be to heaven!" said the Creole, "and to you, for that comforting speech. No form of human words ever sounded so sweetly to my ears as that one sentence! It has plucked a shaft out of my bosom that has long rankled there, and has healed the wound of years in a breath. I am now Ringwood's equal! Let him dare to taunt me now, and he shall have it hurled back in his teeth, and the lie along with it."

"Not yet," said the woman, "the time is not come. But remember every wrong; record every insult; add word to word, and deed to deed, till the whole heap of injury be worthy of a stern and deep revenge, a full and final atonement."

"That is a task beyond the stretch of my patience," said the Creole. "I must strike now — now, when I am stricken. In a short time we return to Oxford, where the unworthy insult may find repetition; amongst the fellows — in common-hall perhaps — but the walls shall re-echo with my contradiction."

"And where are your proofs?" said the woman. "Will you refer to the words of an obscure vagrant — a reputed gipsy — who professes to have nursed you in childhood — a tale very improbable, though strictly true? But be satisfied; the proofs may one day be necessary to establish your civil rights, and be assured they shall be forthcoming."

"And why not now?" asked St. Kitts, with a gesture of impatience.

"Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, "I will not be questioned. If not your parent by course of nature, I am the direct representative of your mother; and in right of my entire love and devotion ought to possess your

gratitude and confidence. Wherefore am I in this country? why in this earth even, but for the sake of Walter Tyrrel? He is the last link of a chain of love, the sole tie that attaches me to a weary world, where otherwise my own hands would long since have shortened my passage to the grave. My sun is set and my day is in the wane, but there is still one bright point in my sky, like the sole star of the evening, — you are that solitary star, that particular orb, to which my affections, my hopes, and my wishes, all point with the constancy of the magnetic needle. For you and your welfare, I am ready to peril my body here, and my soul hereafter, and for this, in the absence of her who bore you, your duty is due to myself. Yes, Walter Tyrrel, you must love me, honour me, and confide in me. You must listen to me — and you must obey me!"

"I cannot dispute your credentials," replied the Creole; "neither will I rashly reject nor admit your rights over me: but I may reasonably protest against the mode in which they are proposed to be exercised. Granting such a connexion to be established between us as you have asserted, what possible reason can exist for letting it lie dormant, whilst we mutually suffer by imputation; you — excuse me — as an equivocal character, and I under a stigma which you declare to be unfounded? Your manners and language persuade me that you have occupied a situation in life to which my uncle would gladly endeavour to restore you."

"Never," said the woman, with energy, "never will I become a dependant in any of its grades. A free will such as mine has been, cannot stoop to be controlled, or even to be gainsaid by advice. Rather would I lead, as I now live, the life of a savage. With sufficient means to supply the wants of nature, I shall be contented to act as the guardian genius of Walter Tyrrel; and to serve him well and truly I am willing to remain a nameless foreign wanderer, unshackled by any further communion with the world and as unrestrained by its laws, customs, and prejudices, as the very queen of the wild vagrant tribe I am supposed to govern."

"At least," said St. Kitts, who began to be touched by her devoted professions of attachment, "you will allow me to contribute to your personal comforts. My uncle's allowance is liberal, and, with my own small annuity, enables me to lay by a sum that I would cheerfully appropriate to your service. It would at least provide a decent lodging."

"I am lodged already," said the woman, "and have a home, such as befits my homely fare and my household habits. You shall have my secret, and I must know some of yours. We are met in the very spot for such divulgings; where a change of the cheek from white to red, or from red to white, would be perfectly invisible. In this solitary lane there is a night-like shadow, even at noon-day, and the over-arching trees lay their heads together and tremble and whisper like state conspirators. You have heard of Hennessey's Hut?" — the Creole nodded assent — "a temporary lodge, for the use of some gamekeeper who committed murder there, or was murdered, I remember not which. It is there that I dwell, a desolate woman within desolate walls, and in the solitude I covet; — for the hut is haunted, and the vulgar take care not to intrude on my retreat for fear of encountering the duppy — I mean to say the ghost. Some day you shall visit me there; but mind, Walter Tyrrel, not without an invitation."

"Your secret shall be as safe with me," said the Creole, "as in the keeping of the dead. And now, under the same solemn pledge, what do you seek to know from me?"

"It concerns yourself," said the woman. "I have some foreknowledge of your fate; for whatever man or woman wishes to be, they may generally become; we are masters and mistresses of our own fortunes, more strictly than the weak and the timid are willing to admit. My questions refer therefore to the present, rather than to future contingencies: and in

the first place, for what profession does your uncle design you, when you hall quit the University?"

"For my father's profession," said the Creole, — "the army; Sir Mark has promised to purchase me a commission in the Guards."

"Aye," said the woman, "to carry the colours throughout the prime of your life, and be a captain at fifty, if not earlier slain in battle, or carried off by a duel: for your complexion will be apt to excite the raillery of the officers. They may some day think of tracing your pedigree to the black cymbal-player in the band of the regiment, — aye, there's a scowl, and your hand seeks for a sword! But to be serious. Your main hope is your uncle: but fox-hunters sometimes die suddenly, — a neck is broken in an instant, — and after the death of Sir Mark, how would your prospects look if gilded with no more sunshine than would be shed on them by the new Baronet, Sir Ringwood?"

"Cloudy enough, heaven knows!" answered the Creole.

"But again," said the woman, "if Sir Ringwood also should break his neck, for he too is a follower of Nimrod, and that pale-faced youth, his brother, should succeed to the title and the estates, would your hopes be brighter then?"

"Not a whit," said the Creole. "If the first of November were foggy and gloomy, I should hardly look for better weather on the second. My two cousins, with respect to their love for me, are equal shareholders in a very small capital."

"And if Raby should die too," said the woman, "what would happen then?"

"The estates would go to the heir-at-law," said the Creole; "and Tyl ney Hall would have a new master."

"Yourself, Walter Tyrrel; your own self;" said the woman. "Has it never entered your mind to inquire into the order of the succession?"

"Never," said the Creole. "As a natural son, the subject did not con cern me; nor does it much interest me now, when I am declared legiti mate. It is such a remote chance as I would sell, this minute, for Esau' mess of pottage."

"Nevertheless," said the woman, "it is such a chance as may happen. I have known as rapid promotions without a war. In the West Indies, the cassava-worm and a long thumbnail would make it certain; but to you, that is a riddle. As I said before, hard riders get hard falls; and a fox-hunter may be in at his own death, instead of reynard's: neither do I consider that a pale, sedentary student must necessarily be a long liver, because he sits when he should walk, and watches when he ought to sleep; no, the thread the fates spin for him is frail and short."

"It is just possible," said the Creole; "but Raby rhymes with maybe — he may some day, like Prospero, drown his book, and renew his lease of life by turning gentleman-farmer; while Ringwood may tire of the chase. But enough of this: mine is not the patience that can wait barefoot for the reversion of dead men's shoes. I would rather be the builder of my own fortune."

"Yes — hod-carrier and all," said the woman, with a sneer; "tediously raising it up, brick after brick; and I may live long enough to see the foundation. Time is as necessary to raise fortunes as forests; there must be growth, growth, growth. A year or two may suffice to environ you with belts and clumps of saplings; but century on century must elapse to surround you with the magnificent oaks, and chesnuts, and beeches, that embosom the Hall. Methinks it were a proud feeling to ride down its stately avenue, and looking round on that lordly mansion, and its noble park, to exclaim, All this, Sir Walter Tyrrel, from the sky to the earth's centre, is your own!"

"A proud feeling indeed," said the Creole; "but you might as well, like Satan, take me to the top of a high mountain, and offer me the kingdoms of the earth."

"Walter Tyrrel!" said the woman, angrily, "you have twice quoted from a volume in which I place no faith; and the second time to liken me to a devil; but I will not now dispute about creeds. You may believe or not in those scriptural prophets, provided you will also give your credence to me. I pretend to nothing beyond human foresight; yet as surely as there is an air we breathe in, so certainly shall you ride between those trees I have mentioned, and you shall feel the proud feeling I have supposed, and think the very thoughts I have uttered! Mark my words, and you may well wish them to come true. The man ought to have some such prospect before him, who hopes one hope that I could name to him."

"It is a flattering promise, truly," said the Creole; "but to obtain such implicit credence, you must go to my aunt's Scotchwoman, who puts faith in the second-sight, a superstition in which I am not yet a believer. But what is this hope, which demands such a golden consummation?"

"To — marry — Grace — Rivers," answered the woman, with an emphatic pause between each word, at the same time placing her hand upon his arm as if to judge of the effect of the communication; and she had well judged its power. He started up, as from an electric shock, and for some minutes stood gazing intently at the speaker, as if he expected a bodily change to come over her; but there she sat, in the same quiet attitude, neither moved by his emotion nor surprised at his amazement. The gloom of the place would not allow him to distinguish the smile that played on her face, but it was implied in the very tone of her voice when she spoke: —

"Pray sit down again, and do not stand staring about me for a black cat or a broomstick, as though I were a witch. Is it anything marvellous, that one who has known love in all its phases, should be able to detect the signs of the passion in another, more especially when that other has been watched so narrowly as I have watched Walter Tyrrel? I could tell you things infinitely more startling, without reference to any familiar but experience."

"I will doubt nothing you can tell me hereafter," said the Creole, resuming his seat. "By heaven, you have bared my heart before me, and shown me hopes, and wishes, as strange to me as my own person, before I saw it reflected in a glass! But say on, for I recognise the augury, and from this moment you shall be my oracle and my guide."

"I have confessed to you," said the woman, "that I have been a very spy for your sake; I have walked with some as silently as their shadow, and I have talked with others, who thought they were conversing with a man; but that was a masquerade. I have watched and listened; and you shall have the sum of my intelligence. One thing is certain; your love for Miss Rivers must be hatred of your two cousins, for the youngest is your rival, and I fear, a favoured one."

"I believe it, indeed," muttered the Creole, between his teeth; "but Raby shall never have her!"

"You are right," said the woman. "She is destined to prefer Ringwood, by special agreement of the two fathers — aye, clench your hands and stamp your foot! were I a man, nay woman as I am, no living being should stand safely between my heart and its object. But the right hour will come. You are soon to return to Oxford; but your college studies must be very different to those you have hitherto pursued. Instead of poring over Greek and Latin authors, fix your eyes intently on the book of fate — read your own fortune — turn over the pages of your hopes, your wishes, and your fears; think of Raby and Grace Rivers — think of Ringwood, and of me — resolve what to do, and resolve to do it — there is a

bright path before you. In the mean time man may plot, but woman can counterplot; and there is one whose whole wit and will, heart and soul, are devoted to your service. Be of good courage! The taunt will be avenged, the grave will receive its dead; and then, when the Hall is won, and the lady is wed, and my word is fulfilled, Sir Walter Tyrrel himself will be the first to do thus."

As she pronounced the last word, the Creole suddenly found himself in her arms, and before he could disengage himself she kissed him on each side of the face; she then broke away with her usual abruptness, and hurried along the lane, leaving St. Kitts to gaze after her, like a man "drowned in a dream."

At last he remounted his horse and rode thoughtfully homeward; and as he reflected on what had passed, his memory recalled a thousand trivial circumstances, inexplicable at the time of their occurrence, but now that he was furnished with a clue, they all tended to corroborate the intelligence he had received. The mutual attachment of Raby and Grace, and the matrimonial scheme of Sir Mark, were soon clearly developed, and then came rash and revengeful thoughts and suggestions more dark and dangerous, which were chased away only to return again, like the flies round his horse's head. As he entered the avenue he involuntary repeated the words which the woman had predicted he should some day utter in that spot; and the title of Sir Walter Tyrrel was repeated again, and again, and again, in mental echoes, till he stood on the very steps of the Hall.

Fortunately he arrived a short time before the party returned; and throwing himself on a sofa, he prepared to act the indisposition he meant to plead in accounting for his abrupt departure from Hawksley. As he really looked jaded and distressed, the excuse was well received; the Baronet, indeed, remarked on his languid appearance the moment he entered, and prescribed a tumbler of mulled wine, and an application to Dr. Bellamy, the latter of which recommendations the Creole declined. It was nothing, he said, but a headache and dizziness which had made him hasten into the air; and, since the ride home he was better, and should be well in less time than Old Formality would consume in coming.

"Egad," said the Baronet, "you stole away cleverly; nobody but Ringwood saw you break cover. We all settled down to it that you had bolted after the gipsy, to get her to tell from her conjuring cards what sort of hands you are to hold through life."

"And here is your dog, St. Kitts, which you forgot in your haste," said Raby, putting down the little animal on the sofa beside his master, who fixed his eyes intently on the speaker, and his distempered fancy whispered to him that a smile of malicious triumph accompanied the delivery of the rejected spaniel. He returned thanks, therefore, with a bitter frown, which was attributed to the pain in his forehead; but it proceeded from a deeper pang; and from that moment the woman's injunction concerning the feeling he should entertain towards both his cousins was rigidly obeyed. Ringwood had for some time been his aversion, and the brother now became an object of equal dislike. Every sigh for Grace involved an execration on Raby, so that, unnatural as such an allegory must appear, Love carried the torch of Hatred in his hand, and fanned it with his own breath.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Verily, his temper hath travelled, and put up so frequently at certain inns, that it hath adopted their signs. It shows as fiery as a Dragon, as angry as a Red Lion, as rude as a Bear with a Ragged Staff;—he is as bad company as a Blue Boar, and hath gotten the trick of bellowing out his words at the Bull and Mouth.

EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR.

For my part, I was always a bungler at all kinds of sport that required either patience or adroitness; and had not angled above half an hour, before I had completely satisfied the sentiment, and convinced myself of the truth of Izaak Walton's opinion, that angling is something like poetry —a man must be born to it.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

They met all innocence — and hope — and youth:
And all their words were thoughts, — their thoughts pure truth:
Every new day that pass'd, pass'd them the fleeter,
And hours, though sweet, were chased by hours still sweeter:
Love had adopted them.

THE GARDEN OF FLORENCE.

A FEW days after the visit to Hawksley, an old acquaintance called at the Hall, and, taking Sir Mark by the foot, instead of the hand, politely insisted on his remaining seated in his easy chair: in other words, the Baronet was disabled by a fresh attack of podagra; his feet swelled, and, being carefully swaddled up in flannel, were deposited on a sort of stool of repentance.

The gout is a perfect Judge Jefferies in trying the temper, for where it tries it always condemns; and even the good humour of the fox-hunter became bitter bad under the inquisition in his extremities; whilst the aspect of domestic affairs contributed not a little to fret him and stir his bile. Under the inflictions of this disorder, he always became very meditative: as his bodily activity was restrained, his mental energies grew busy; and, when his limbs resumed their usual exercise, his mind became passive in proportion. Thus, when the fleshly race lies prostrate at dead of night, the disembodied spirits rise up and walk; and at morning, when the ghosts lie down again in the grave, the carnal tribes get up erect, and move about — such is the alternate reign of the immaterial and the material. In this posture, Sir Mark had leisure to ruminate on many a cud composed of sour and bitter herbs, which supplied him with plenty of vinegar and gall; and during his splenetic fits he employed himself in framing fret-work, putting toads under harrows, and similar amusements, in which œdomatous martyrs are apt to indulge, at the expense of those about them. He drove the student to sporting, and the sportsman to study— forbade Ringwood's visits to Hollington, Raby's to Hawksley, and the Creole's to either; whilst Mrs. Hamilton was tormented with complaints, till she almost wished herself back at Glencosie; even the first favourite, had she been present, would hardly have escaped a snubbing. Never before had he been known to be so cross-grained and perverse: he was really a family nuisance, from which there was no escape; for when any one left the presence, he did not fail to compare himself to a wounded deer that is shunned by the herd; and if that failed, there was an absolute command from him, as commodore, not to part company.

Thus assembled round him in the drawing-room, the party would have made a whimsical family picture, every individual being in a strange element, like the personages in the modern farce of "Fish out of Water," where the ambassador's secretary has to make chocolate, and the cook tries to write despatches. Beside the fireplace, in gloomy gouty state, sat the

Baronet himself, occupying a sort of forbidden circle, within which no human foot could approach, without incurring an awful denunciation. He was quite as much out of his line as any one, for he held the "Paradise Lost" in his right hand, and a chair on his left was occupied by some dozens of volumes, forming a pyramid of poetry. On the other side sat Mrs. Hamilton with a newspaper, and a weary sleepy look, as if she had been sitting up all night; but in truth she had only been reading some long prosy dozy speeches in the "Parliamentary Debates" of that period, and listening to her brother's comments, equally tedious and somniferous, for of all disagreeable tics on earth, politics were as odious to her as sheepticks, fanatics, frantics, splenetics, or tic-douloureux. Next to her sat Raby, fumbling among fur, wool, feathers, and silk, pretending to make a May-fly, in deference to the paternal humour; and opposite to him, at a table, sat Ringwood, like a great schoolboy, copying out the poems which his father selected, while at the end of the same table St. Kitts attempted to propitiate the gouty temper by working on an unfinished drawing of "Hounds going to Cover," which he had thrown aside in disgust the year before.

The Baronet eyed them all in turn, making mouths at them, and crabbed faces, which perhaps belonged to pain, and perhaps to peevishness; and, like an armed ship among gun-boats, he kept firing away, now a shot at one, and then a shot at another, wherever he could bring his artillery to bear.

"Here, Ringwood," he said, "copy out this piece of Mr. Milton's poetry, and begin with 'Grace was in all her steps'—Zounds, sirrah, 'ware gout! Keep off my toes! Can't you let me die first, before you try to thrust your feet into my shoes? Look there, Raby will be dubbing on till doomsday; his May-fly will be in time for August. Why, boy, if you were thrown on a desert island, like Robinson Crusoe, you would be starved alive, for you can neither hunt, fowl, nor fish! But go on, Kate, with the debate about royal marriages,—or give me the paper, for I see it goes against the grain with you. I know your opinions on such subjects. You would have the heir to the crown go a-courting where he likes; love's a plant with strong roots, and the Prince may plant it at a cottage door, and his royal father is not to speak a word. Parents are not to interfere; there's to be no whipping-in; young people are to run riot, babbling after whatever game they like, hare or fox, deer or rabbit, or even pulling down mutton. Let 'em match, racer and cartmare, no matter what. I suppose if you heard Dr. Cobb putting up Ringwood Tyrrel and Dolly Wiggins, or Raby and Nancy Trott, or St. Kitts and the queen of the gipsies, you would not stand up, not you, and say, I bar the banns?"

"Upon my word," said Mrs. Hamilton with a subdued smile, "my imagination never suggested any associations so improbable."

"May be not," said the Baronet testily; "but you can't guess a young lover's line quite so well as a fox's; you do n't know whether he 'll go up the wind or down the wind;—but go on with the speeches—or stay, I 'll first take a look at my nephew's picture"—(the drawing was handed to him)—"Aye, going to cover,—and I hope they 'll find a fox with three legs, or else they 'll never catch him. There's a hound for you; some of Alderman's blood of course, for he 's pot-bellied enough for the father of the corporation."

"My dear sir," said the Creole, "it 's only in outline, and that apparent bulk, when it comes to be rounded off with the shadows——"

"Round it off with a paring-knife," said the Baronet, who seemed inclined to punish the Creole for carrying Blenheim spaniels to Hawksley. "And here 's a nag! Egad, your huntsman is queerly mounted. I 've seen a good many horses in my day, some standing high in front, and some behind, and so forth, but I never met with a nag with two long near legs and two short

off-legs, like this phenomenon. He must lean on one side in going, like a yacht in a squall."

"My dear uncle," said St. Kitts, "it is the perspective that makes the legs of such different lengths."

"My best thanks for the information," said the perverse Baronet; "the next horse I buy I'll have it put into the warranty,—free from splint, spavin, ringbone, and perspective. You may well grin, Ringwood; but get on with your writing,—and hark ye, do it in a gentlemanly sort of running hand, and not like a charity-boy's Christmas piece. A bit of a curvet, too, with the pen, now and then, is well enough, but the last copy I saw, half your words left off with a little flourish that had the very twist of a sow's tail.—Yes, yes, St. Kitts, it's now your turn to grin; but remember one thing—if it should please God to reduce us to beggary, we mus'nt turn drawing-masters;—no, nor fishermen neither, if we fumble over a hook like Raby.—Curse this gout!—I'll tell you what, Kate, you want me to have Dr. Bellamy, I know you do by your looks,—but if I'm to leave this world, I don't want Old Formality to bow and scrape me out of it. So mark me; if he enters the Hall, I'll walk away from it; I will, by Jove, if I walk on my hands like a mountebank!"

In this querulous tone the Baronet indulged for some time, till at length the fly-maker jumped up, and, to the envy of his fellow-sufferers, quitted the room, exclaiming as he went, "Now for a trout!"—a fish for which Sir Mark had taken an untimely yearning, and, with the waywardness of a longing woman, he insisted that it should be caught by no one but his younger son.

Accordingly, to the utter astonishment of the household, the studious Raby was seen setting forth from the Hall with a fishing-rod over his shoulder; but, with a prophetic misgiving as to his piscatory success, he carried neither basket nor can. In lieu of these, one pocket was furnished with a copy of Walton's Complete Angler, a volume he was very fond of reading: skipping, however, all the parts that related practically to angling; and in the other pocket was a note-book, wherein he occasionally pencilled scraps of verse, the originals of which would have been vainly sought for in the poets from Homer downwards. A few stanzas, which he composed and entered in its pages during his progress through the park, will serve to show the very unsportsmanlike tone of feeling with which he could walk over a domain abounding in game of every sort, without once taking aim with his mind's eye, or putting a wish upon half-cock.

Play on, ye timid Rabbits!
For I can see ye run,
Ne'er thinking of a gun,
Or of the ferret's habits.

Ye sportive Hares! go forcing
The dew-drop from the bent;
My mind is not intent
On greyhounds or on coursing.

Feed on, ye gorgeous Pheasants!
My sight I do not vex
With cards about your necks,
Forestalling you for presents

Go gazing on, and bounding,
Thou solitary Deer!
My fancy does not hear
Hounds baying, and horns sounding.

Each furr'd or feather'd creature,
Enjoy with me this earth,
Its life, its love, its mirth,
And die the death of nature!

Thus provided, he directed his steps towards a stream which flowed round the extremity of the park, and divided the estate of the Baronet from that of the Justice; but a little rustic bridge afforded the means of communication between the neighbours, when they chose to visit each other on foot. The brook was shaded only on one side by trees, so that, from the opposite bank, the angler could freely cast his fly upon the water, and, to judge from many a silvery flash, as the fish sprang out of the green shadows, in skilful hands the line would not be cast in vain. In one part the stream had a slight fall, sufficient to cause a continual murmur and a desirable agitation of the water, for the trout, like champagne drinkers, prefer the brisk and bubbling to the still element: and here Raby ought to have plied his bait; but from ignorance, or some latent reason, he chose a station near the bridge, where he prepared his tackle, and probably no human being ever took rod in hand with such premeditated forbearance towards the finny race.

A single trout was all that he wished or designed to capture; but from the style of his commencement, even that one had a chance of remaining uncaught. The very first cast lodged the fly upon the branch of a tree, to which it was so partial that it refused to return with the line; but Raby was unconscious of the loss, and kept whipping on, till his arm ached, of course without obtaining a single rise. Such bad luck astonished him; for, although he was a novice in the art, he had been led to expect differently by the description in Walton, where the tyro has half a dozen trouts at his fly in the compass of a single page. His patience, therefore, began to fail; and, concluding that there was something adverse in the weather, or the water, or in the fish themselves, he laid his rod down on the bank, and pulling out his note-book, began inditing some lines to the king-fisher, which had just glanced across his eyes like a flash of blue light. He had written thirteen lines of his sonnet, and was concluding it with an "alas! that brightest things should be the fleetest," when he heard the sound of footsteps, and, under the impulse of his usual nervousness, he instantly pocketed his book, and caught up his rod, and began fishing with all his might, like a school-boy who had neglected his task for a story-book, or a lawyer's clerk who had been detected

"Penning a stanza when he should engross."

Fixing his eyes intently on the water, and professing to be quite absorbed in his sport, he hoped to escape notice or recognition; but his manœuvre was in vain; the passenger crossed the bridge, and, coming to his elbow, accosted him in a voice as familiar to him as his own.

"Powers of magic! what do I see? Raby Tyrrel transformed into a fisherman!"

"Even so, Miss Rivers," — answered Raby, quite as much embarrassed as his line, which had just entangled itself with a bramble; "and fortunate it is that you are no poor woman, to whom even a chub would be a charity for I have not a single fin to bestow."

"No great trial of temper, I dare say," answered Grace, "though such a result would make some anglers forget the meekness that belongs to the character. You were always confessedly averse to killing in sport, and I perceive you have been fishing very characteristically without hook or fly."

The angler blushed, as he looked towards the end of his line and discovered the deficiency. "I guess how it is," he said: "my artificial insect

imitated the natural one so abominably that it chose to settle on yonder willow, and there it hangs, no doubt with its steel sting through one of the twigs, instead of the gills I intended it to pierce."

"What! *you* fish, in earnest?" exclaimed Grace, with a mixture of real and mock astonishment, "I can hardly believe my ears. You have neither turned Catholic, nor is this Lent: what eloquent old Palmer has converted you and made you a disciple in his art?"

"The gout, Grace, the gout," answered Raby; "that has transformed every one at the Hall. It has converted my good-humoured merry father into a terrible tormentor, who has been riding by turns on all our necks, like the Old Man of the Sea. In obedience to his whim, I botched up a May-fly with my own hands, and came hither to catch a trout for his dinner. I wish he may not have to make shift on a minnow."

"A most filial work," said Grace, "and one deserving better success. It makes me wish that, like Cleopatra, I could send my divers to hang trout upon your hook. But pray fish on; for Sir Mark's dear sake, I would try myself to bob a bluebottle about in the water. Take another fly, and I will sit beside you and look on."

So saying, she seated herself on a large stone, which served as a parochial landmark, while Raby affixed a fresh fly to his line, and resumed his angling; but the consciousness of being watched, and especially by the dark blue eyes of Grace Rivers, caused a tremor from his heart down to the very tips of his fingers, and his line started and trembled as if a large fish had actually been struggling on the hook. At last he bethought himself of a way of diverting her attention from his own unskilful attempts.

"There, Grace," he said, handing her a book from his pocket; "there is a volume that will amuse you far better than my unsuccessful practice. It will delight you with its refreshing pastoral images, and some sweet madrigals to boot, besides setting you right in your technicals, when you have to speak hereafter of the mysteries of the angler's gentle craft."

The young lady took the book with a smile, and was soon deeply engaged with its contents; whilst Raby resumed his sport, if so it may be called, for not a single trout would rise to his fly, though he whirled it about, bobbed it up and down, drew it backward and forward both slowly and swiftly, and then let it lie motionless. He might as well have fished in the zodiac, attended by "the man that holds the watering-pot" to receive "the fish with glittering scales." At last, in a desperate throw, he dislocated the top-joint of his rod, which dived endwise into the stream, then sprang up again, and, settling on the surface, began to drift away with the current. It was irrecoverable. He watched the slender top-gallant till it whirled out of sight in a bend of the brook, and then turning round to address his companion, he started to behold her, with a flushed face, hastily closing the volume he had given her to peruse. The truth flashed on his mind in an instant, and he stood aghast, in something of the predicament of Cardinal Wolsey, when he saw his secret papers in the hands of his incensed sovereign.

As for Grace, she had cause for surprise, perhaps anger. Opening the pages at random, the unsuspicious girl had found some such poems as the Sonnet to the Woodpecker, and the stanzas recently composed in the park, which she read with more admiration than a professed critic would have thought due to their merit; and she was just meditating a compliment to Raby's taste in the selection, when her eyes arrived at the conclusion of some lines, the last of which convinced her that one poem, at least, was no extract, but original. It ran thus:—

> If to believe that dreams were truth,
> And all the fond romance of youth;

Each pictured charm that fancy prized
In one fair form now realised;—
If to sum up in that dear scope
My all of joy, my all of hope;
Where faithlessness there could be none,
For all the sex was merg'd in one—
If to be happy in her nearness,
Holding her very silk in dearness;
As if my heart could have no home
But where she was, or was to come—
If from the contact of a finger,
An after bliss for days could linger,
A feeling kept secure and chaste,
Till by the next sweet touch effac'd—
If to pine after pow'r and glory
But for one sake—if in love story,
To make each tenderest phrase refer
All that is bright and good to her—
If with all thoughts to haunt her bow'r,
True as the bee is to the flow'r;
Her image join'd with all day-scheming,
And nightly worshipped in all dreaming—
If these be signs that love delivers,
I am thy lover, fair Grace Rivers.

The conscience of Raby instantly furnished him with the words which had caused so much confusion; and any young gentleman of a modest unassuming disposition, of retired habits, and withal constitutionally nervous, may estimate his consternation when he found that, without preface, apology, or introduction to the reader, he had placed in the young lady's hands a plain broad declaration of love. He threw his fishing-rod into the stream, and hastily snatched the tell-tale book, which he seemed half inclined to send after the rod, in practical imitation of Southey's dismissal of a volume of poetry:

"Go forth upon the waters, little Book!
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!"

"Grace—Miss Rivers," he stammered, "upon my honour—by all that is most sacred, I thought it was another book. Here it is—Walton's Angler," and he pulled out old Izaak's work with a crash that told his precipitation had been fatal to his pocket.

"I am afraid—I hope—there has been a mistake," answered Grace, equally embarrassed, and with her face averted towards the brook. "My eyes caught a few sentences; but they are banished, forgotten, like words read in a dream."

As she spoke, she rose up from the stone, as if to depart, but Raby detained her by seizing her hand. "My dear Miss Rivers," he said, "do not leave me in anger. However you may condemn the sentiments which accident has disclosed, say—oh, say that you forgive me. Leave me the comfort of thinking that my inadvertence has not forfeited the favour I formerly enjoyed."

"There is no offence," replied Grace, disengaging her hand. "I have nothing to forgive; nay—but I have cause of quarrel, for I now know the source of many poems I have received. Was it fair, Raby, to pass them upon me under a feigned authorship?"

"The same crime as Chatterton's," said Raby; "but do not condemn me to the same fate."

"And what was that?" inquired Grace, not ignorant of the melancholy death of "the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his

pride," but willing to turn the conversation on subjects less embarrassing.

"To live joyless, and to die despairing," answered Raby, with a tone which proved that, lover-like, he would extract from all possible topics some reference to his own passion. "He wooed the Muse, and in return she starved him — and must I perish too, Grace, with this hunger of the heart?"

"Nay — I am not so implacable as Poverty," replied Grace with a smile and a blush. "We will still be friends — under that relation we have enjoyed many pleasant hours together, and — and — I would have the future to resemble the past."

"And why not happier and brighter?" exclaimed Raby, with all the animation of rekindled hope. "Why not happier, brighter, and warmer, as the summer exceeds the spring? Grace, dear Grace, chance has brought on the moment I have long desired — long dreaded. In that volume you have read my heart. You know the secret of my soul, — that I love you — dearly — deeply — devotedly —"

He paused; — while Grace, deadly pale and trembling with agitation, resumed her old seat on the stone, covering her face with her hands, like one dazzled by a sudden flash of that sheet-lightning which seems as universal but infinitely brighter than the blaze of a meridian sun. Almost as sudden, and as vast and searching, was the flowing radiance by which her own heart became illuminated in its most secret recesses, discovering objects before veiled in shadow, but now brought to view with a startling prominence; in one instant, as by inspiration, she arrived at that most precious of all temporal revelations, "I love, and I am loved!"

A delicious moisture crept to her eyelids as she became conscious of this tender truth; an indescribable tremor thrilled through her whole frame; she seemed spell-bound in a delightful dream, where the will is entranced and passive; and she had neither the wish nor the power to rescue the hand which, by gentle violence, was withdrawn from her face, now glowing with the warmest tint of the rose.

A low sweet voice in the mean time poured into her ear, like a strain of music, to which her heart beat time, accompanying such language as belongs to that eloquent passion which turns even the prose of life into poetry. It did not plead in vain; love at length found its echo in a few syllables that scarcely outmurmured the stream, and they tasted together that sweet apple of knowledge which introduces a pair of lovers into Paradise instead of driving them from it. Many pens have attempted to describe the transports of such moments, but they have never been adequately pictured in writing, unless perchance on that mysterious block of marble in the East India Company's Museum, inscribed with characters which no human linguist has yet been able to decipher. Suffice it, then, that mutual vows were exchanged, and had just been ratified by an embrace, when an exclamation from Grace and a motion with her hand directed Raby's attention to a shadow in the water, and looking upwards for the figure that caused the reflection, he saw the brown woman standing watching them from the middle of the rustic bridge.

The presence of a stranger at such a time would have been sufficiently annoying; but there was besides such a sinister expression in the dark countenance that lowered on them, that had the owner been younger, her angry frown would have seemed to belong to jealousy and the hatred of a triumphant rival. She soon left her station, and approached close to the lovers, fixing her dark searching eyes first on one and then on the other.

"So you have been wooing," she said, addressing herself to Raby; "aye, and you have been won," she added, looking earnestly at Grace. "I know love-signs well. You have told your tale, and you have vowed your vows, but, like the seed of the shaddock, you know not whether the fruit shall be

sweet or bitter. *I* know it: and take my warning; build not upon sand; the frail edifice you have erected may withstand a few ebbs and flows, but a spring-tide of sorrow shall wash away its very foundation."

"Never mind her, Grace," said Raby to the terrified girl, who began to tremble under her untimely denunciations; "heed not the gratuitous ill-bodings of a sybil, who, for a tester, will promise you the fulfilment of the most extravagant wish you can frame."

"You are mistaken, young man," said the woman in a severe tone, "I am no mercenary prophetess, and if I were, gold a thousand times told should not alter the presage or avert its fulfilment. As for you, young lady, your doom is doomed. If you take this pale-face, you suffer the penalty of your choice — wo be to your depraved taste, you die the death of a dirt-eater."

"Woman!" said Raby indignantly, "you are mad, or worse than mad; but if you were all that you pretend to be, and linked even with the enemy of mankind, in the company of such an angel of light as this I would defy even the powers of darkness." So saying he drew the arm of Grace within his own, and attempted to end the conference by walking away; but the ill-omened prophetess removed at the same time, and still confronted them.

"Miss Rivers, a *wretch* speaks to you," she said, in bitter allusion to the epithet that Grace had formerly applied to her; "but marry that man," and she pointed to Raby as with the finger of fate, "and you shall be as wretched as I am. Heed not his smooth words, and his soft speeches, — they are but the sound of kitty-katties, the empty clatter of sticks upon a board. There is one loves you with a love as far surpassing his as a pine-apple to a sleepy pear."

"Let us go," shuddered Grace, "she is mad and dangerous."

"No," said the woman, "my brain is sane and sound. She is the mad woman who ventures her all in a frail bark that is doomed to founder. She is the crazy one who betroths herself to a phantom. But you see not as I see, — you scent not the churchyard mould and the worm afar off, nor do you hear the death-toll forestalling the wedding peal. Grace Rivers! revoke your plight, if you would not be a widow ere a wife! You are depositing your young heart in a marble urn — yes, there you cling to him — foolish girl, you are hanging on a skeleton!"

"Do not tremble, Grace," said Raby, in an under tone, with an affectionate pressure of the fair form beside him, "do not deign to tremble at the croak of such a raven. So far from feeling any death-like forebodings, I seem as if the last sweet half hour had made me immortal. As for you," he said, turning to the woman, "your outlandish allusions have betrayed the origin of your soothsaying. In the West Indies this Obeah work might answer your purpose, and the ban would be dearly bought off; but, remember, you are in England, where there are laws for vagrants and impostors — and if I may prophesy in my turn, I shall live long enough to see you doing penance at the cart-tail."

"And I shall live," returned the woman, with frightful earnestness, "to see you tortured in mind, heart, and soul, till you shall long rather for a bodily scourge, though every lash were a whipsnake. Smile as you list — that hand you are now holding you shall never possess — let it go, — link not one finger with hers, or the hour shall come when you will curse your own cruel love, for pulling her down with you into an unripe grave. Yes, it shall close over you like this!"

As she pronounced the last word she threw a stone into the stream, where the water instantly swallowed it up out of sight, and before the first diverging ring had reached the bank, the speaker was twenty paces distant, and was seen walking swiftly away, with the graceful easy movements

that characterize the females of the western islands. To say that Grace, or even Raby himself, was uninfluenced by the woman's forebodings, would be probably untrue: the human mind in youth, imbued with a touch of romance, is prone to superstition; indeed, love itself is a superstitious passion, and this religion of the heart, like the Roman Catholic faith, is apt to associate itself with mystical theories, emblematical rites, idolatrous worshipping, and miraculous legends. What lover, who believes in his lady's transmutations, that her smile will turn a wilderness into a garden of Eden, can refuse his faith to the Philosopher's Stone? What admirer can gaze on his mistress in her becoming full-dress, without thinking that, like Belinda, she has had the help of more than mortal hands, fairies and sylphs, on every fold of her gown? What adorer can watch his own likeness reflected in his empress's eyes, and deny that the starry spheres are influential on the fate of man? Not one. Initiated in love, we become adepts in all other occult sciences, and are devout alchymists, astrologers, and Rosicrucians. Every-day creeds and studies, and common-place images, will not suit the high tone of the exalted phantasy. The all-important course of true love seems like the mortal progress of a soul assaulted on one side by legions of devils, and defended on the other by banded angels. Hope watches for signs, and Fear for omens; and the same intense spirit of affection, which invokes round the head of its object the bright shapes of joy and promise, is apt to conjure up the dark phantoms of difficulty and danger that encircle its feet. The brightest sunshine throws the darkest shadow, and the horrible spectre of Death could never frown so sternly and blackly as when thus introduced into the full blaze of the golden glorious light of love.

Moreover, the brown woman had spoken with the decided tone of one who either felt confident of the infallibility of her prediction, or possessed the power and the determination of wresting the event to its fulfilment. Although she had at first repudiated the notion of fortune-telling, it had been attributed to her so generally along with the title of Queen of the Gipsies, that, like Mother Sawyer, in the old tragedy, who, from being a witch by repute, became one by habit, she gradually adopted the popular belief, and conceived herself endowed with the spirit of prophecy. A shrewd and subtle foresight, as to the probable course of human affairs, which she had formerly referred only to her own sagacity, experience, and knowledge of the world, was now associated with supernatural prescience, and the vague looseness of her religious principles made her indifferent as to the good or evil nature of the practice, as well as the source of the gift, whether an inspiration from heaven or an emanation from hell. The imputed attribute greatly extended the dominion she already enjoyed — "the power of a strong mind over weak ones." Amongst the lower orders it invested her with respect and awe, and consequent protection from aggression or insult, whilst from servants and retainers it procured private goodwill and unbounded confidence, furnishing her with a circumstantial history of the past and present in exchange for the glimmerings she chose to give of the future. Implicit faith produced its usual fruit, a blind obedience, and every menial that communed with her became readily a spy or agent in the family with whose fortunes she thought proper to interfere.

In a moody fit, with the Sybilline fancy strong upon her, she had accidentally become a spectator of the ratification of the new tie between Grace Rivers and Raby Tyrrel, and, remembering the rival interests of her own foster-child, St. Kitts, her wish was no doubt father to the thought that suggested the premature death of the favoured lover. Appalled by her vehement threatenings, it was natural that Grace should shudder and cling to Raby, and it was quite as natural that Raby should fondly press her to his side and whisper words of encouragement, though his voice be

trayed that he partook of the common tremor, like a nervous man at table who attempts, with a shaking hand, to distribute a shaking jelly. But the alarm was transient. The thought of death passed away like a fanciful illness from which the invalid suddenly recovers at the proposal of a party of pleasure; and as Raby looked at the beautiful girl, now destined to be his own, every gloomy shadow was swallowed up in light, and he felt as elated and confident as if his life had been assured in the Phœnix, his happiness in the Globe, and his love in the Hand-in-Hand.

Time flowed on as unheeded as the stream by which they stood, while they reiterated their vows of mutual constancy, and opened their hearts to each other with the gushing confidence which belongs only to that fair fond pair, by name even harmoniously predestined to be everlastingly united, Youth and Truth. At last they reluctantly quitted a spot hallowed and endeared to them for ever as love's confessional; but before they left it, a keepsake was offered and accepted, being neither more nor less than the poetical missal which had led to the disclosure. The flutter of Grace's spirits not permitting her to pay the intended visit at the Hall, she returned home, escorted by Raby, who never remembered that he had been forbidden to go to Hawksley till he stood on the little bridge, in his way back. As he stopped to rest, and gazed downward on the brook, now a Castilian one, his thoughts flowed into verse, and thenceforward the first leaf in his Walton contained a poem, which is not to be found in any other copy.

Still glides the gentle streamlet on,
With shifting current new and strange;
The water that was here is gone,
But those green shadows do not change.

Serene, or ruffled by the storm,
On present waves, as on the past,
The mirror'd grove retains its form,
The self-same trees their semblance cast.

The hue each fleeting globule wears,
That drop bequeaths it to the next,
One picture still the surface bears,
To illustrate the murmur'd text.

So, love, however time may flow,
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
One constant image still shall show,
My tide of life is true to thee.

Having wound up these lines instead of his fishing ones, he returned to the Hall, where an exchange of prisoners had taken place during his absence. Mrs. Hamilton was walking in the garden; the Creole was gone out for a ride; and Ringwood had previously cantered off towards Hollington, with an anxiety all his own, as to the convalescence of the Head of the Hive. In lieu of all these, Squire Ned was sitting in the drawing-room, tête-à-tête with the Baronet; the worthy friends being deeply engaged in the same pastime as those celebrated Irish gamesters,

The Trout and the Salmon
A-playing Backgammon.

Luckily for our Piscator the interest of the throws with the dice quite superseded the ineffectual ones he had made with the May-fly, and the unsuccessful issue only drew from his father one protracted remark. "I do n't wonder in the least — tray-deuce — It would surprise me a deal more

— cinque-ace — if he brought home even a stickle-back or a miller's-thumb — sizes. — Egad! the fellow's head has got so bookish and wool-gathering — tray-cater — I should n't stare to see him some day — tray-ace — with a jack upon his hook, trying to catch a minnow; — the hit, by Jove!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Come, bustle, bustle, caparison my horse.

KING RICHARD III.

A blow! Have I received a blow? —'T is well.
I'll not return it now; but put it out
To interest — compound — interest on interest,
At most usurious rate; this single buffet
Shall grow to scores before it be repaid,
And then, like Nature's debt, shall be discharged,
Death sealing the acquittance.

ROGER MONCKTON.

THE arrival of the Squire, as stated in the last chapter, had the effect of releasing the weary satellites who had been in attendance on the gouty Baronet. Ringwood was the first to avail himself of the opportunity: as soon as his father and Ned had well settled down to their game, he joyfully threw down the pen from his cramped fingers, and made his way to the stable, his temper not a little turned by the penance and task-work he had been undergoing, as well as by the imagined insult of St. Kitts, who had seemed to watch his compulsory penmanship with a malicious pleasure. In this wayward mood he determined to break through the *taboo* which had made Hollington a forbidden spot, and calling to the first groom he saw, he desired him to saddle his horse instantly.

"If you please, sir," said the man; "he 's amiss. Dick ordered him a warm mash, —

Ringwood immediately hastened to the loose-box appropiated to his favourite, where he carefully smelt his nostrils, coughed him, examined his eyes, and felt his legs with the gravity and skill of a professed veterinarian.

"It 's nothing, Davis, but a cold," he said, at the end of the inspection, "but I won't ride him to-day. Saddle Cadeau." This name had been bestowed by the Creole on a horse his uncle had lately presented to him in lieu of little Toby Spitfire, that had carried him when a boy.

"I beg pardon, sir," said the man — "but Mr. Walter is rather particular about Cadeau, — he lets nobody ride him but himself."

"I will try that," answered Ringwood, contemptuously. "If he indulges in such exclusive fancies here, I will break the charm. Mr. Walter shall trudge a-foot, rather than I will want a horse."

"If it 's no offence, sir," said the man, "you are surely joking. There 's plenty of horses in the stables — Sorrel, and Roadster, — or the cob — any one of 'em would carry you every bit as well as Cadeau."

"I will have *him* or none," replied the headstrong Ringwood; "so bring him out at once."

The man made no further objection, but proceeded silently to obey the command. He knew that the young Squire had been always accustomed to have his own way, and that his wilfulness, like that of a spoiled child, would only be aggravated by opposition. In a few minutes Cadeau was saddled, and led forth: "I hope sir," said Davis, as he delivered the bridle, "you will stand my excuse to Mr. Walter. I do n't know what he will say."

"Let him say,—" answered Ringwood, coolly mounting and adjusting himself in the stirrups. "If he's insolent I'll transfer the bit from his horse's mouth into his own."

So saying he wheeled the animal round, and trotted out of the stable-yard; leaving Davis staring after him, so absorbed in cogitation, that full five minutes elapsed before he resumed the whistling of "Nancy Dawson," which this episode had interrupted.

In the mean time the Creole, perfectly unconscious of this invasion of his rights of property, willingly consigned his unfortunate drawing to the portfolio, in the secret hope that it might slumber there for another twelvemonth; and in a common spirit of disobedience to the Baronet's injunctions, betook himself on foot to the forbidden path in which Raby had preceded him, towards Hawksley. He had not gone far in that direction, when, at some distance, he perceived the brown woman traversing the Park with great expedition; she also recognised him, and after stopping and looking carefully round, altered her former course, and came swiftly to meet him. As she approached, he could hear her muttering to herself, her face was flushed, her hands and arms were particularly restless, and her step seemed sometimes like a stamp.

"Walter Tyrrel," she said, in a low tone, trembling with passion, "prepare your ears for a tune that will seemed played upon your heart-strings. The election is over, and Raby Tyrrel is in the chair, and his cousin candidate on the ground."

"Speak out at once, woman," said the impatient Creole; "I am in no humour for unravelling riddles."

"Briefly, then," said the woman, "Grace Rivers has made her choice. She has chosen the white loaf, and leaves the brown one to the coarser taste of some cottage girl."

"It is impossible," exclaimed the Creole, hastily, forgetful of his own contumacy; "Sir Mark prohibited his going to Hawksley."

"Aye, but he went to the bridge yonder, and she met him there; and I am mistaken if she did not meet him half way in love to boot. But no matter. The vow is vowed; I heard it uttered, and saw it sealed,—heart pressed to heart—and lip to lip. Yes, Walter Tyrrel, I saw the pale face turn to carnation, as it touched with hers—but it shall be whiter, aye whiter and colder ere long, or I am no prophetess—his death is foredoomed. His flesh shall feed the John-Crows!"

"Or mine," muttered the Creole, between his teeth; "he shall answer to me at the sword's point, for thus crossing me in my course."

"Steel shall not meddle," said the woman; "but this match shall be broken, if hearts should break with it."

"Mine is stricken to the core," said the Creole, with a deep-drawn sigh: "hope cannot beguile me: this fresh stroke only shows me my unfortunate position in the world. Had Raby never been called into existence, what chance was there for me—a being of doubtful birth, and a dependant."

"For the first complaint," said the woman, taking a packet from her bosom and putting it into his hands, "here is a present remedy—for the cure of the second we must have time and other means. Walter Tyrrel, be a man; or would you sit down patiently under it, wear their white favours, and put a piece of the bride-cake under your pillow to ensure pleasant dreams?"

"Never!" cried the Creole, violently stamping and clenching his hands: "tell me—directly—say what I should do, and it shall be done."

"Do nothing—and say nothing—wish only for revenge, and revenge shall come—but not, Walter Tyrrel, from your hands. I will think for you—feel for you—act for you—and where can you have an agent

more devoted than one who is all but a mother? One who will not shrink where you would shrink, nor scruple where you would scruple. My creed does not bind me so strictly as yours, but it has served me well hitherto, and it may serve you now. Question me not — doubt me not — what I do is done for your good; what is to be endured or perilled shall be at my own sole risk."

"I will submit to your guidance," answered the Creole; "but why must I walk in darkness — why blindfolded? I would rather see in what paths I am going, and whither they tend."

"Foolish boy!" said the woman; "where should they tend but to the fulfilment of the bright fortune I foretold for you? When Sir Walter stands at the altar with Grace Rivers — with all his dearest hopes and wishes fulfilled — will he care to ask by what roads he arrived there? Be satisfied that the way shall be as safe as the end is sweet. But this is no place for us to be seen together. Go! — love on, for your love shall prosper — and hate on, for your hatred shall triumph. But bear yourself fairly and smoothly, as if a rival's rash vows had not come to your knowledge. In the mean time I will work hard to earn the love and gratitude which some day you shall render me. But farewell at once."

With her usual celerity she departed, directing her course towards a thicket, in which she soon disappeared; whilst the Creole retraced his steps to the Hall for the fear of encountering Raby, in his present mood, which would certainly have led to an explosion, in defiance of the injunction he had received. His temper still possessed the tropical fire which his father had alluded to on his death-bed; and though he had learned to restrain it for purposes of artifice, the sight of a successful rival might have inflamed it beyond his control. Moreover, he was impatient to examine the important packet he had received, and stealing into the Hall by a back way, he ran up to his own bedroom, fastened the door, and hastily broke the seal of the envelope. The first paper purported to be a certificate of marriage, between Herbert Tyrrel and Indiana Thurot, attested by the signatures of the principal authorities of St. Christopher's; the unusual alliance between a white man and a woman of colour apparently requiring the evidence of an especial document. The other two papers were letters; one from Colonel Tyrrel, addressing the said Indiana as his wife, and containing the most ardent expressions of admiration and attachment; the other was addressed to the husband by the wife; and after similar outpourings of love, broke into a warm eulogy of the devotion, tenderness, and attachment of one Marguerite as the fostermother of their dear Walter. Every lingering doubt in the Creole's mind was removed by the perusal of these papers; and he resolved to resign himself implicitly to the guidance of the woman, in whose favour his parent had given such honourable testimony. He was now in possession of the inestimable document which made him invulnerable to the taunts of Ringwood, and he confidently anticipated that in the rivalship with Raby, his own star would become the ascendant.

"So then," he soliloquized, "the reproach of my birth is removed; that sting will still be aimed at me, but it has lost its venom; and the oftener the insult is offered, the more ample and bitter will be its retracting hereafter. I am now Ringwood's equal in all but his expectations — but no — if Marguerite reads fate aright, mine are loftier than his — the heirship of Tylney Hall and the hand of Grace Rivers. That bookish Raby too — let him exult — the brightest hopes of the two brothers are absorbed in mine."

So saying, he kissed the important packet, and deposited it in his desk; and with a prouder step and a haughtier air than the dependent St. Kitts had ever been known to assume, he descended the stairs, and stalked off to the stable, for it still wanted two hours of dinner-time, and he chose rather

to ride out alone than to spend the interim in the drawing-room. He addressed the groom in a peremptory tone that matched with his humour.

"Saddle Cadeau, fellow, and be quick."

"Cadeau — Sir,"—said the man, hesitating and stammering, as if each word was jolted out of him by a hard-trotting horse. "Cadeau — Sir — did you say — Cadeau?"

"Yes, fool," answered the Creole. "You know *my* horse, don't you? Quick, bring him out."

"I can't," replied Davis doggedly; at the same time resuming the cleaning of some harness which he held in his hand.

"And why not, you scoundrel?" asked St. Kitts, who never condescended to restrain his temper with a menial.

"Because he *is* out;" returned Davis, with the quiet tone of a man who is giving a reason perfectly unanswerable. "Brown Bastard is amiss, and so the young Squire has taken Cadeau."

"What, Ringwood!" exclaimed the Creole, bursting into an ungovernable passion; "what! take my horse — without my leave — without apology — tell me, rascal, did he leave no message for me, when he took this liberty?"

"Never a word, Sir," answered Davis, "if you mean in the way of begging pardon."

"No doubt," said the Creole, "it was more likely a new insult than an apology for the old. Villain!" shaking his clenched hand at the other, "I insist upon knowing what he said — the very words that he used."

"Why, then, if you will have it, Sir," answered Davis, giving, as servants are apt to do, a rather free paraphrase of the original version, "he said, if you made a fuss about your horse, he 'd saddle you, and bridle you, and ride upon your own back."

The Creole made no answer; but his blood boiled at the disparaging terms thus delivered: he took several angry turns up and down, muttering fiercely to himself; and, at last, stopping short in front of Davis, with his face almost in that of the affrighted groom, he said, in a deep imperative tone, "Saddle his own horse immediately."

"For God's sake, Mr. Walter," began poor Davis; but the Creole cut him short by sternly asking "whether he was to do a groom's duty with his own hands;" and with a deep sigh of reluctance, the man proceeded on his ominous task. Devoutly did he pray for the return of Brown Bastard's master, before the favourite could be mounted; and he wisped, and sponged, and combed, and brushed, and trifled with the stirrups, and dallied with the girths, till a volley of oaths from St. Kitts proved that his patience would bear no more stretching.

"Remember, Sir, I wash my hands of it," said the foreboding Davis, as he took his place at the horse's head; but the West Indian made no answer; he seized the bridle, setting himself in the saddle, and scornfully dashed the rowels into the flanks of the steed, as if he had been planting thorns in the side of its owner.

The gallop never slacked as far as Davis could keep him in sight. In fact, the excited rider had gone half way to Hollington before he pulled up; then, for the first time, he remembered the brown woman's advice, that he should conduct himself fairly and smoothly towards his cousins, and he blamed his own precipitation, which would probably involve him in a quarrel too serious to be concealed from Sir Mark, who might recall the opinion he had formerly entertained of his nephew's moderation and forbearance. Besides, an ultimate and full revenge had been promised in atonement of whatever slights or offences he might endure at the hands of Ringwood, and the most politic course would be to return with the horse to the stable, and to bribe Davis to secrecy. But it was now too late: at the very instant, while he was in the act of turning, Ringwood appeared in the lane; his

quick eye detected his favourite at a glance, and in a twinkling the two horsemen confronted each other.

"St. Kitts — how is this — how dared you?" Ringwood added in a fierce tone, as he noticed the distressed panting of the cherished animal.

"I am not fond of lying under obligations to Ringwood Tyrrel," replied the Creole, with as calm a tone as he could assume, "and I should never have thought of borrowing his horse, if he had not previously deprived me of my own by a forced loan."

"His wind is broken," exclaimed Ringwood; "dismount, d—n you, dismount instantly, or I 'll unhorse you — get down, I say," — and he reined up his own horse alongside the other.

"Let those who were the first to mount, set the example of dismounting," answered the Creole, warily holding his whip so as to be ready to parry a blow, if such should be offered.

"Down, I say — down at once," cried Ringwood, his voice choking with passion, "that saddle is mine, and a bastard shall not sit in it."

"Bastard in your teeth," retorted the Creole, irritated for the moment beyond prudence; "my mother was a mate for yours."

At this degrading comparison, for so the hearer considered it, his eyes flashed fire, and his whip rose and fell. Mutual blows were exchanged with the quickness of thought, till Ringwood, dropping his whip, seized the collar of St. Kitts, and striking Cadeau with the spur at the same time, the Creole was suddenly dragged over his horse's crupper, and fell backward in the road. Luckily the spirit of the high-couraged animal had been taken out of him, or his rider might have suffered some serious injury from the fall; as it was, the shock stunned him; and when he recovered and rose up again, he saw Ringwood seated in the saddle from which he had been thus violently expelled.

"You shall rue this dearly," he said, with a menacing gesture, "I will have satisfaction for this insult, and when *you* fall, you shall not rise again as I do."

"If you mean blades or bullets," answered Ringwood contemptuously, "they belong to your betters — a barn-door cock has no right to steel spurs. As for satisfaction, all that a naked hand and arm can give, you are welcome to." With the last syllable, the speaker put his horse into a trot, and left St. Kitts, shaking the dust off his person, fervently hoping that the act would bring a curse upon his enemy as surely as was promised to the Old Apostles. Bitter and deep were the imprecations he uttered as he mounted Cadeau, and rode slowly towards the Hall; but when he entered the avenue, and perceived Ringwood riding along it at a foot's pace, that he might leisurely look about him, his lips curled into a scornful smile.

"There he goes triumphing," he said mentally, — "forestalling his heirship no doubt — and looking on house and lands as if they were already his own. Yes, these are Sir Ringwood's old chesnuts, and these are his tall oaks — and yonder are Sir Ringwood's deer, and this is his ample park, and that is his noble mansion. And what are the possessions of poor Walter Tyrrel? An opprobrious nickname, — a disgraced body, — the clothes I wear, and the horse I ride — nay, *that* is Sir Ringwood's too, when he so pleases. I am a poor dependant, — rejected, insulted, outraged, and beaten — beaten like one of his father's hounds! Aye, there 's a caracole — what a flourish before he dismounts — and how lordly he ascends the steps of the Hall, — but shall it ever be his? — never, never, never. The door that is now opening to him will close behind his corpse. Yes, Walter Tyrrel will be living and loving, while the eye that scorned him shall be closed in lead, the tongue that slandered him shall be choked with dust, the heart that hated him shall be food for worms, and the accursed arm that struck him shall be rotting from its carcass."

Since the sunrise, the owner of this reverie had met with various and vexatious reverses: he had been thwarted in his love, invaded in his rights, grossly insulted, and personally dishonoured; but through all the gloom of these reflections his foster-mother's prediction shone out as in letters of fire; and the bitter pangs caused by unrequited wrongs, degraded honour, and dissatisfied resentment, were considerably abated, when he regarded the human figure before him as a mere mass of mortal carrion, over which he should have to exclaim, "how sweetly smells the body of a dead enemy."

By what means, fair or foul, he was to arrive at this consummation, he could scarcely guess; but to describe honestly the workings of his mind it must be owned that unnatural causes became conjoined with natural ones in his surmises, and he entertained dark and dangerous ideas, which recoiled indeed, but only to leap further, and still further onwards, like the waves of the advancing tide. To suppose those waves sometimes tinged with the blood-red of a stormy sun would but too faithfully denote the occasional complexion of his tumultuous thoughts, when the imperious demands of revenge became transiently paramount over holier claims. It is true that he dismissed the first sanguinary scheme as soon as formed; but the Cain-like suggestion, once admitted into the human heart, is apt to become a haunting one; and as the air-drawn dagger in Macbeth was only dispelled by the clutching of the real weapon, so a shadowy tragedy will preoccupy the mind's eye, which is only to be superseded by the substantial performance. The Creole, therefore, to his alarm, found his cogitations taking a repugnant turn, which produced a natural shudder; but, in spite of himself these direful promptings became more and more frequent, and consequently less startling and horrible, till finally their attendant phantoms became familiar images, which as they came unbidden were allowed to remain or depart of their own accord. As yet he was only revolving in the outer verge without making any apparent approach towards the fatal centre of a vortex, from which, however, few are able to escape, who have once entered in the sinful circle. It would seem that to think of blood is to shed it; so certainly does the crime succeed its shadow. The man who once casts his eyes towards murder is thenceforward drawn towards it, like the bird fascinated by the snake, still trembling, but still hopping nearer and nearer to the object of its dread, till it falls into its fangs. In the gloomy calendar of deadly violence this principle is frequently obvious: the cruel deed is at last perpetrated, not simply to indulge the yearnings of revenge, or the hankering for gold, but to rid the wretch from the intolerable sway of a tyrannical absorbing thought—which had gradually overgrown his whole mind with the torture and tenacity of a cancer. Witness the struggles of Matthew Henderson, who murdered his mistress. Several times he mounted the stairs towards her chamber, and as often descended with human compunction. But the diabolical suggestion was not to be silenced; — at each new attempt it urged him a degree further, till step by step he at last attained the bed, and the imperious impulse was drowned in the blood of its victim.

In the first stage of this awful progression, the Creole might be considered as now moving, though at a pace scarcely perceptible: it depended on Marguerite's own plans, whether he was to be made actor or accomplice in any deeds of violence; but if such were in contemplation, she had certainly succeeded in placing him in that initiatory state of preparation, through which a novice in blood must generally pass. The seed she had scattered had fallen on congenial soil; and the evil passions of hatred, jealousy, and envy, had sprung up rapidly into growth, like rank weeds, whose veins are filled with malignant juices, obnoxious to human life. Nevertheless, in pursuance of the line of policy laid down, he smoothed his brow, and discarded his frowns, as he re-entered the Hall, where, after repairing some disorder in his dress, in his own chamber, he descended to the drawing-room just as

Ringwood extorted from Raby some particulars of his success in fishing—with the confession of the loss of his rod, which, as the ownership of the implement was a point of some interest, he was especially requested to describe.

"I took the first that came to hand," answered Raby: "a dark-coloured one, I think, with silver studs on the butt-end."

"My own trolling-rod!" exclaimed St. Kitts, —his equanimity somewhat disturbed by this new appropriation—"it was a Cadeau, too;" glancing at Ringwood, "a gift from Woodley, of Maudlin's; but I beg my kind cousins to consider nothing of mine as my own when they have a use for it."

"Spoken like a generous, free-going fellow," said the Baronet, having just gammoned his adversary—"that 's what I call good action. Book it, St. Kitts, that I owe you the best fishing-rod to be had between London and John o' Groat's. It does me good to see you hold so together, instead of flying off," here he smiled, "like Raby's top-joint."

This good-humoured speech had its due effect on the brothers and St. Kitts; and the latter especially adopted a tone of courtesy towards his cousins that was well calculated to hide his real feelings, whilst Ringwood pursued the same course, like parties engaged to meet each other in mortal duel, but who felt it expedient in the mean time to preserve appearances.

By favour of this guarded intercourse, the day passed over quietly, but the thoughts which St. Kitts had banished and staved off in company, revisited him in the night. At one time, in the character of Death on the Black Horse, he rode over the prostrate Ringwood; and then, filling the holy office of Vicar, as a substitue for the Rev. Dr. Cobb, he read the marriage service backwards, and the Devil appeared bodily to forbid the banns of marriage between Raby Tyrrel and Grace Rivers. Anon the brown woman appeared to him transfigured as one of those ambulatory sextons with a cart and bell, as described in Defoe's History of the Plague, exclaiming with a loud voice, "Bring out your dead," and the livid corpses of the Baronet and his sons, and of Davis, along with the carcasses of two horses, were cast out as part of the lading of the miscellaneous hearse. Other images, still more incongruous and fantastic, gradually crowded into his vision, and when he woke in the morning, it was from a spectral congregation of frightful demons, accompanied by one fair face and form, like the apparition of Faust's Margaret at the Witches' Sabbath, in the Hartz Mountains.

A short time after the occurrences recorded in this chapter, the three collegians returned to Oxford, one of them secretly wearing in his bosom a lock of bright auburn hair, to remind him that he was destined to an honorary degree beyond that of a bachelor. By special agreement, they were to return from the University to be present at the fête champetre at Hollington, if it should happen to be appointed to take place during term. A great deal of amusement was anticipated by all parties at this festival; and even Grace Rivers suddenly changed her mind about visiting the Twiggs, and declared that, if invited, she should make a point of being present at their rural gala.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sure such a day war never seen.—

TOM THUMB.

The day,
The great, the important day, big with the fete,—

CATO.

You have now a broken banquet, but we'll mend it.
A good digestion to you all; and once more
I shower a welcome on you; welcome all.—

HENRY VIII.

AT last, after several postponements, the welcome letter came to hand, permitting Twigg, junior, to exchange the hardware of business for the soft ware of pleasure, the age of iron for the age of gold, by repairing from London to Hollington, in order to be present at the rural jubilee at the Hive, or, as the epistle described it, "the grand to-do out of doors."

The preparation for pleasure is sometimes a very painful interval; a sort of purgatory preceding paradise. As theatrical adepts well know, the getting up of a pantomime is quite as serious a business as the rehearsal of a tragedy: a spectator of its preliminary workings would never conceive that the product was to be that broadest of broad faces, the Christmas Festival in honour of Momus. Instead of a fairy-land, inhabited by Love, and Beauty, and Mirth, the area of the stage appears but a nook of this working-day world, equally subject to Care, Labour, Jealousy, Envy, Rage, Terror, and Disappointment. Instead of the brisk bounding Harlequin, a jaded morose mortal lounges about the boards, walking through his capers — literally taking his leaps standing, and giving a brief nod for a roll of the head. A weary and wan Columbine, with the same scornful indifference, drags lazily through her appointed figure, and then concluding with the ghost of a pirouette, leans sulkily against a side scene, and like a Pharisee in petticoats, disdainfully compares the deficiencies of the rest with her own perfection. The Clown, an indifferent scholar, painfully puzzles out his written part, with a vexed brow, a sleepy eye, and a most dogged mouth; as rueful and forlorn a figure to expect quips and cranks from, as the skull of poor Yorick. The very Fairies, delayed in their aerial descent by some hitch in the machinery, hang dangling aloft with faces full of terror and pain, while by frequent changes of posture, they hint to maternal anxiety, that their darling little limbs are horribly cramped by sitting on wooden clouds. The Sylphs scream from fright, and Cupid whimpers with hunger. All is noise and hubbub; for Pope's rule of optimism is reversed — Whatever is, is *wrong*. Nature stands on her head instead of the Clown, and capers and throws somersets, till her phenomena are all topsy-turvy. Skies fall, water will not find its level, and the moon silvers the trees with a blood-red light; the thunder runs a race with the lightning and gets first. Unnatural connexions take place amongst the scenery, and produce monsters. A view of Regent Street, by new laws of attraction, draws towards a section of a Storm at Sea, and Ben Lomond is capped, not with a cloud, but a stack of chimneys. Articles that ought to transform, adopt the code of the Medes and Persians, and resolutely refuse to change. Ropes break, hinges snap, water catches fire, and gunpowder does not ignite; spirits will not come when they are invoked, but the military march on, illegally, without being called in. Blunder begets blunder with the fecundity of the rabbit, till the boarded plain, the heights above, and the caverns

below, are swarming with the awkward headlong progeny, blind as at their birth. The property man is bellowed for, and a tailor responds to the cry; he is dismissed with a flea in each tingling ear, and testily sends down a carpenter, who makes the same April fool of a painter, who thereupon catches the call-boy by the nape, and shakes him like a ferret with a rat, which provokes call-boy's father to resent with a punch, and the lie direct, as to his call-boy having called. Oaths patter, and blows go round. Every living being seems reciting some part of Collins's Ode on the Passions with appropriate action,

> Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
> Possess'd beyond the Muse's painting.

Here an indignant dioramist raves at a boggling scene-shifter; there the enraged machinist knocks down a fuddled carpenter's mate. In front a frantic composer storms and stamps at an unmanageable fiddler; in the back ground an impatient Pantaloon clamours about a misfit, — meanwhile the three Unities put the same question as the three Witches in Macbeth, "When shall we three meet again?" and receive the same answer, — "When the hurley-burley's done."

In the midst of this dramatic storm, the author of the pantomine runs to and fro, and bellows till he is as hoarse as a boatswain, now through a speaking trumpet to the men aloft, and then throwing himself prostrate on the boards, to send an order into the hold. Anon he sits down, on any thing but the chair that is placed for him, but jumps up again, as if from a German stove, and rushes to clear the deck of a deafening chorus, perversely ignorant of the memorable motto of Ravenswood, "I bide my time." Then a dilatory workman is cursed by bell, book, and candle, but he stops short to pronounce a benedicite on a fluttering band of affrighted dwarfs, who are taking his malediction to themselves. Sometimes he helps to lift a cloud, or props a house with all his might; sometimes he is seen bullying a dragon or kicking a giant, — extinguishing a moon on fire, — acting in dumb show for example, — scrambling up a ladder, — hauling at a rope, — tumbling over a crocodile, — at last, quite rampant, swearing at all eyes and tearing his own hair, he very probably makes a sudden exit through a forgotten trap-door.

To see a pantomime in this stage, is like getting a glimpse of Chaos.

For some days previous to the fete, the Hive presented a similar scene of hurry, scurry, worry, and flurry. As usual, Twigg interfered in every thing; and his voice, like that of the Christmas spectacle-maker, was heard from all parts of the house, swearing, entreating, threatening, exhorting, directing, or disputing with his wife and daughter on matters of taste. Never in the days of his industry had he laboured so unremittingly, so early and so late: he really slaved bodily like a negro, while Pompey, the true nigger, was set to work on matters far surpassing the dim intelligence of an African brain; the most provoking blunders naturally followed, and the black, as might have been expected from one of his complexion, "played the very devil." Many a tumble he had over the numerous packages from London which encumbered the floors and the tables, the stairs and the chairs. It was well the Hive did not happen to be a glass one, such as those which invite the spectator to observe the wonderful order, harmony, regularity, and exact distribution of labour, evinced by its busy inhabitants. Indeed, the House of Industry much more resembled a wasp's nest, where the peevish swarm were all restless and irritated by some resent disturbance. Every body was out of humour. Mrs. Twigg scolded and wept by turns, and threatened to faint, but had not time to spare for fits; and the cook fumed and broiled at her mistress's culinary interference. The coach-

man sulkily helped in the kitchen, to whip cream instead of horses. The butler quarrelled with the footmen; and the housemaids among themselves. The gardener growled and grumbled while he transported his hothouse plants into the open air, cropped all his choicest buds and blossoms to make bouquets and fill baskets, nor did it make him amends for his real flowers, to see artificial ones in wreaths and festoons decorating his favourite "old statues," so that Mercury looked as if he was going to dance in a ballet, and Neptune as if he had just come from Covent Garden. The grooms grew weary of galloping express on coach-horses, as the jealous tradespeople of the village tardily executed, or altogether neglected, the stray orders for forgotten articles which they grumbled "had better have been had down from London like the rest." To crown the confusion, the cub arrived full of boisterous spirits, and began to amuse himself with a whole flock of *larks*, a phrase that indicated those practical jokes, in which persons of limited capacity are so apt to indulge. He locked the butler in his pantry — sent off the footman, when most in request, on frivolous errands — plugged the pipes of keys — fastened chairs together — set tables topsy-turvy — shut the cat in the china-closet — fastened the house-dog to the gate-bell — and then was discovered ranting as Belvidera, with his clumsy person thrust into a new dress that had just been sent home for his sister. 'Tilda screamed and scolded, the mother begged and prayed — but the mischievous spirit of this domestic Caliban was not properly quelled till Twigg senior had ten times turned him out of the business, twenty times cut him off with a shilling, and, at last, given him a sound cuffing with his own fatherly hands.

It seemed impossible that the festive preparation could be completed by the given day; but the time came, and every thing was in order. As the cub had predicted, the governor had rolled a great many entertainments into one. In the centre of the lawn stood a large marquee, containing an ample cold collation, which made a very showy appearance, the principal dishes being kept cold by the new massive silver covers, each surmounted by the family emblem, a bee, big enough for a cockchafer. Above this pavilion waved, or rather should have waved, a broad silken banner, that had often fluttered and flaunted in the procession of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, but now, for want of wind, hung down as motionless as a piece of hardware. In a line with the marquee was a target for archery, so posted, that whoever missed the butt would have a fair chance of hitting the tent; whilst, for the accommodation of anglers, the margin of the large fishpond was furnished with sundry elbow-chairs, wherein the sedentary angler might enjoy "the contemplative man's recreation," in the immediate vicinity of a country dance and a pandean band, in those days as fashionable a band as Weippart's or Colinet's at the present time. To accommodate the musicians, the octagon summer-house was fitted up as a temporary orchestra, in front of which stood a column of benches three deep; for Twigg, on personally inviting the pedagogue of Prospect-House, and begging a whole holyday for the boys, had embraced that eligible opportunity of borrowing all the school forms. On the opposite side of the garden, the orange-trees and exotics from the hothouse formed an avenue up to an arbour, christened, for the occasion, the Temple of Flora, and specially dedicated to the occupation of Miss Twigg, who undertook, in an appropriate fancy dress, to represent the Queen of Flowers. The Hermitage, in a secluded corner of the grounds, had its rustic table furnished with a huge portfolio of coloured caricatures; and the paddock was devoted to trapball and cricket, the wicket for the latter game being considerately pitched, so that a barn on one side, and a haystack on the other, would materially assist the fieldsmen in stopping the ball. A whimsical feature remains to be mentioned. In anticipation of syllabub, Daisy, a pelled Alderney, was tethered at a corner

of the lawn, a stone Cupid seeming ludicrously to keep watch over her, in the capacity of a cowboy.

Such were the festive arrangements over which Twigg glanced with a satisfaction that made him frequently wash his hands without water or soap, while he mentally contrasted the gay scene before him with the humble prospects of his youth. He was dressed in a full court suit of plum colour, in which, as Sheriff, he had gone up with an address to the King; his partner, with her *embonpoint* and her pink satin, looked extremely like that hearty and substantial flower, a full blown cabbage-rose; while 'Tilda, in apple-green silk, festooned with artificial flowers, and her hair wreathed with real ones, appeared actually, as he expressed it, "a cut above human nature."

At the first encounter of husband and wife in their full plumage, she saluted him with a very profound curtsey, which he returned by an elaborate bow, as if in joint rehearsal of the ceremonies to come, and then they mutually congratulated each other on the propitious weather, for the sky was calm and cloudless, though it was rather hot for the season: indeed, as Twigg said, he should have thought it "very hard if a man of his property could not have a fine day for a fête."

One thing puzzled the worthy pair. Few of the neighbouring gentry had accepted their invitation, though the Hive was so handy, and they had carriages of their own; whereas the metropolitan families who had been asked, came almost to a fraction, notwithstanding the distance was considerable, and many had to hire vehicles. It was singular, besides, that those who had the farthest to travel arrived first; guests from Bishopsgate, Ludgate, and Cripplegate, came in, and had successively made the tour of the house and grounds before a single soul was announced who belonged to the vicinity. However, the interval was a grateful one, for it allowed the master and mistress of the Hive to feel really "at home" with their former connexions, and to indulge in the luxury of civic recollections, unrepressed by the presence of their more aristocratic acquaintance. Mrs. Twigg exhibited to her female friends her drawing-room, bed-rooms, store-room, kitchen, washhouse, brewhouse, and her unprofitable dairy; meanwhile Twigg paraded his old cronies through his dining-room, billiard-room, study, and stables, or trotted them round the grounds, pointing out peeps and prospects, and then rushing back to act as showman to fresh batches, who were successively ushered into the garden by Pompey, his black face opening from ear to ear, like a personification of Coalman's Broad Grins. The coachman, in topboots, assisted the footman; and the gardener, a sort of Jerry Blossom, fancy-dressed in a straw hat, peagreen coat, skyblue hose, and parsley-and-butter waistcoat, trotted after his master, to give the proper names of the flowers and shrubs, for the proprietor scarcely knew a peony from a pink.

At one o'clock all the company had arrived, excepting the Tyrrels and the Riverses; many of the younger guests coming in fancy dresses, more or less tasteful: there were Swiss, Turkish, and Grecian maids; nuns, Dianas, nymphs, Spanish Dons, troubadours, monks, knights, a shepherd, and no less than three shepherdesses, without a sheep. The air was now become oppressively sultry; but Twigg suffered little from the weather, in comparison with his hot and cold fits of nervousness and anxiety, originating in other causes than the mere novelty of his situation. First, he had to endure a long complimentary oration from Doctor Bellamy, an appropriate answer to which would have cost the hearer more trouble than a speech in common council; then he had to meet the Squire for the first time since smashing his decanters; — the pedagogue from Prospect House was perpetually addressing him with Latin quotations: and he was especially puzzled by the presence of the Rev. Dr. Cobb, — for archery and cricket

were sports for laymen, and he could think of no clerical amusement, except inviting the worthy vicar every ten minutes to eat or drink. The occasional absences of his son kept him, besides, in an intermitting fever, for he judged rightly, that the cub, when out of sight, was engaged in mischief; above all, he could not help noticing that a damp hung over the spirits of the whole company, which he vainly tried to dissipate. The town party and the country party refused to amalgamate, and took opposite sides of the garden, like Whigs and Tories; nay, the very sexes seemed to antipathize, and the young ladies planted themselves in clumps on one part of the lawn, while the young gentlemen formed groups elsewhere. Possibly, like the guests at the feast after the manner of the ancients, as recorded in Peregrine Pickle, each individual awaited the example of his neighbour how he was to behave or enjoy himself at so unusual an entertainment; perhaps mirth was depressed by the earnest injunction to be merry of the host and hostess, who did not know that to bid a wit "to be funny," is to desire him to be dull. As Twigg trotted to and fro with the activity and volubility of a flying pieman, he indulged in such patter as the following.

"My dear Miss Tipper, I declare, as blooming as ever — glad to see you — take an ice — Mrs. Crowder, have you been round the grounds? — Rev. Dr. Cobb, a glass of wine — Pray make free, gentlemen — Liberty Hall, you know — Matilda, Miss Dobbs would like to see Flora's Temple — 'Tilda looks well, do n't she? — Mr. Deputy, there 'll be a collation at four in the tent; but take a snack beforehand — plenty in the dining-room — come, young folks, be merry, be merry — what are you all for? — there 's bow and arrows, and cricket, and fishing, and dancing on the green, and music — Mrs. Tilby, I know you 're fond of vocals — run, Pompey, and desire Mr. Hopkinson for the favour of a song — my dear, do keep an eye on John, he 's drunk already, d——n him — Mr. Sparks, a glass of wine — the same with you, Mr. Dowson — here, this way into the green-house — come, hob-a-nob — a pretty scene, is n't it, Sparks, my old boy — and all my own property — Mr. Dowson, I can't help remembering old times; but many 's the time Sparks and me has clubbed our shillings together for a treat at Bagnigge Wells. A great change though, says you, from that to this. I little thought when I wrote T. Twigg with a watering-tin, on a dusty pavement, that I should be signing it some day to cheques for thousands. I do n't care who knows it, but I was n't always the warm man I am to-day. Mr. Squire, pray step in — a glass of wine — glad to see you, Mr. Squire — break as much as you please, and I won't say anything; we shall only be quits — now for a look about us again — where the devil is T., junior? — Mr. Danvers, go to my daughter's bower, she 'll present you a bouquet — Dr. Bellamy, a glass of wine — Miss Trimmer, I know you like solitude; and that 's the way to the Hermitage. Do n't be alarmed at the cow, she 's only flapping off the flies — Dr. Cobb, there 's lunch in the dining-room — Mr. Cottrel, do go and divide those young ladies — beaux, beaux, what are you about? — come, choose partners, do n't let the band play for nothing — Mr. Crump, a glass of wine — "

Such was the style of Twigg's exhortations; who unlike other lecturers, endeavoured to enforce his precepts by practice. He made a dozen ineffectual offers with the trap-bat at the ball, bobbed a fishing-line up and down in the fish-pond, seized Mrs. Deputy Dobbs, and cut a brief caper with her on the grass plat, and finally, fitting an arrow to a bow, the shaft escaped from his fingers, and passed through Mrs. Tipper's turban, where it lodged, like a skewer *a la Grecque*. Such a commencement made every one averse to archery, and particularly as Mrs. Twigg requested that before shooting any more arrows, they would let her put corks on all the points. As to angling, it seemed universally agreed, that on such a day no fish would take a bait; and with regard to dancing, Twigg's tarantula did not

bite any more than the fish, whilst the trap-ball and the cricket-ball were as much out of favour as the ball on the lawn. Music itself seemed for once to have lost its charms, and the most popular of Mr. Hopkinson's songs attracted no auditor but Dr. Bellamy, who sat gravely bowing time, and waving his hand in accompaniment of the long, elaborate, rambling cadences then in fashion, and which might aptly be compared to the extraneous flourishes so much in vogue at the same period, when the pen went curvetting off from plain pothooks and hangers into ornamental swans, ships, dragoons, eagles, and fierce faces in flowing wigs. Indeed, from the evolutions of Old Formality's right hand and fore-finger, their sweeps, and wavings and circumgyrations, and occasional rapid spinnings, a deaf man would certainly have thought that he was meditating and practising some such caligraphic devices on the empty air.

At last Massa Baronet Tyrrel was announced by the obsequious Pompey, and the jovial Sir Mark immediately appeared, with his family, including his daughter elect, Grace Rivers, the avocations of the Justice not allowing him to be present so early. The Baronet, delivered from gout, was in excellent health and spirits; Mrs. Hamilton seemed unusually cheerful; Raby and Grace were of course happy in each other's society; and even Ringwood and St. Kitts appeared either to have forgotten their old feud, or to have agreed on an armistice for the day. The host and hostess were loud and eager in their welcome and salutations.

"Oh, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, in a tone of reproach, "how could you be so behind time? You promised to enjoy a long day."

"To be sure, madam," answered Sir Mark, "to judge by the field, I am rather late at the meet; but no matter — a short burst may be a merry one; and as yet, from all I see, I have lost little sport."

"Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, a glass of wine?" said Mr. Twigg. "A votary of Diana," lisped Miss Twigg, "must be a friend to Flora, — may I offer a bouquet?"

"I shall be proud and happy," returned the gallant Sir Mark, with a bow that belonged to the Hunt Balls; but in stepping hastily forward to receive the nosegay, he unluckily set his right foot with some emphasis on the fore-paw of a little Blenheim spaniel that was careering round Flora's green sandals. The poor brute immediately set up a dismal howl, and the Goddess, divesting her hands with little ceremony of the proffered bouquet, caught up the curly favourite, and began to fondle it in her arms.

"D—n the dog!" exclaimed Twigg, with his usual abruptness; "chuck him down again, and give Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, his bow-pot."

"I am really ashamed of her, sir," said the mother, stooping and presenting the flowers herself; "but the little animal's a great darling, a real Marlbro', and a present from Mr. Ringwood."

The Baronet winced at the information, and could have kicked the dog back to Blenheim with all his heart; while Ringwood, Raby, and the Creole exchanged looks of vexation with each other, which gradually altered into smiles, and at last they all laughed in concert. There is a story current on the turf, of a certain jockey who very profitably disposed of three several whips, to as many gentlemen, as the identical whip with which he had won the Derby; and the keeper, or under-keeper of Blenheim had practised a similar imposition on our three collegians, by selling to each of them the only spaniel of that celebrated breed that "was to be had for love or money." However, each prudently kept the secret. Twigg took the Baronet into the green-house for a glass of wine; Mrs. Twigg invited Mrs. Hamilton to take a peep at the preparations in the marquee, and Matilda led Grace to her temple.

"Well, what do you think now of the great Dutch doll with a ship's

figure-head?" inquired Ringwood, as he watched the departing Flora with eyes full of admiration and triumph.

"Why, I have often seen Jack in the Green," answered Raby quietly; "but I never had the pleasure before of meeting his wife."

"I suppose you mean her festoons of flowers?" answered Ringwood, indignantly; "why, it 's a fancy dress — but I forgot I was speaking to a blind book-worm, who hardly knows a gown from a riding habit." So saying, he turned on his heel, and walked off in pursuit of the Goddess of buds and blossoms.

"Upon my honour, Raby," said the Creole, "I suspect your brother is turned a Pagan, and means to worship the mythological divinity who has just left us."

"Let him worship her," answered Raby, in an indifferent tone; "it is no concern of mine; he is as free to choose his altars as I am."

"Of course he is," answered St. Kitts; "but I doubt whether his father will admit your doctrine of universal toleration. I have reason to believe he would rather the vows of his oldest-born should be offered at the shrine of St. Grace."

"Nothing more likely," answered Raby, with the same composed tone; "my father always called her his first favourite; but as for Ringwood, he has not the taste to prefer Grace with that simple moss-rose in her boddice to the Queen of the daffodils."

The Creole bit his lip. He had meant to disturb the enviable serenity of a favoured lover, but the attempt failed: — the happy rival moved off, of course in pursuit of Grace, and St. Kitts was preparing to follow him, when he was arrested by a twitch of the sleeve, and the cub accosted him with his usual familiarity.

"I say, an't you a scaly chap, now, not to come in character? You promised me, honour bright, you know; and, thinks I, it will be a hat and feathers, and a long cloak; for you've just the cut of the mug, and the brown chops for a Spanish Don."

"I gave no such promise, sir," answered the Creole, sharply.

"Come, that 's a good un?" exclaimed the cub. "And I suppose you did 'nt promise to give us a little spouting? And you don't remember, neither, the bit of speechifying in the lane ——— 'the portrait, the portrait 's the thing, ——— and truth stamps on it?"

"I am no strolling player, sir," said St. Kitts; "but perhaps you mistake me for some of your acquaintance."

"No, I do n't," answered the cub, with a knowing wink; "I 'd swear to your phiz any wheres, and no mistake. Who are you? Why, you 're Watty Tyrrel, alias St. Kitts, alias Gyp."

"The time and place protect you, sir," said the Creole, between his teeth, "or this offensive familiarity should be chastised."

"Punished, eh!" said the cub: "if you 're for a turn up, do n't stick about trifles; the company 's dullish, and a bit of a row will brighten 'em up. For my part, I 'd as soon fight in a ring of ladies and gentlemen, as prigs, sheenies, and costermongers, and we need n't strip. So shy up your castor, and my tile won't be long after it."

"I have no inclination, sir," said the Creole, "to convert this garden into a bear-garden."

"All fogrum," said the cub, adopting a favourite phrase of the highborn and highbred Fulke Greville; "did n't Hamlet and Thing-um-bob fence before the King and Queen, and all the Court? It 's only doing the thing more like Englishmen, with fists instead of foils."

"No, no, I 'll be a party to no such parodies of Shakspeare," said St. Kitts, with a laugh; for he prudently reflected, that it is better to dance with a bear than to fight with him; and, besides, the altercation had begun

to attract the notice of the bystanders; he readily took, therefore, the hand that was held out to him, and accepted the cub's invitation to see "some thing worth seeing," in a distant part of the grounds.

"There it is," said the cub, pointing, with a chuckle, to a garden engine, "it's chuck-full, and a regular sneaking job I had to get it here on the sly. Come, man, pump away like a fireman, and I'll guide the pipe."

"I must first know what is to be got under," said St. Kitts, "before I help to play upon it."

"Why the arbour, to be sure," answered the cub; "those green boards are the back of it. 'Tilda is Flora, and that's her Temple, and as it's hottish weather for her and the flowers, I'm going to give them a benefit."

"You must excuse me," said the Creole, "but I will be accomplice in no such plot; I detest practical jokes."

"Backing out, eh?" said the cub, regarding his companion with a look of contempt. "Why, she'll only give a squawk; I've often cold-pigged her of a morning. But no matter,—I can do it myself. So here goes."

The speaker immediately seized the handle of the pump, and plied it vigorously, with one hand, while the other directed the pipe upwards, so judgmatically, as he would have said, that the jet of water, after rushing some yards aloft, fell in a heavy shower through the lattice-work which composed the roof of the bower. A loud scream, as he had predicted, arose from the interior of the temple, and almost before it had done echoing, Ringwood was in the rear of the arbour, looking round, with glaring eyes, for the projector of this piece of mischief. The cub, however, had disappeared, and Flora's avenger saw only St. Kitts, with his hand still on the pipe, which he had, too late, attempted to avert.

"St. Kitts, by Heaven! I guessed as much!" exclaimed Ringwood, at the same time advancing and shaking his clenched fist within an inch or two of the other's face:—"You scoundrel!"

"Take back your scoundrel," said the Creole, retreating a pace backward; "and carry your threats elsewhere. It was no act of mine."

"It is false!" cried Ringwood, vehemently. "There's no one here, but yourself, who owes me a grudge, or would pay it off in so infamous a manner. You knew I was in the arbour!"

"I have as yet seen nothing but the back of it," answered the Creole; and my sight is not so keen as to pierce through deal boards."

"But you thought I was there, at any rate," retorted Ringwood.

The Creole was silent; he could not deny that he had supposed Flora's votary to be with her in her temple; but he did not care to enter on the reasons which had led to that inference; nor did he choose voluntarily to give up Twigg, junior, as the culprit. This hesitation was attributed to guilt by the passionate Ringwood, whose blood was now risen to boiling heat. "You are a coward, and a liar, to boot," he said, fiercely; "but the punishment shall match the offence;" and he seized the handle of the engine with one hand, and the pipe with the other. St. Kitts, who saw through his design, sprung forward to resist its execution, and in an instant they were engaged in a desperate struggle for mastery. Every sinew was stretched to the utmost, the muscles started out on their hands, and the veins of their temples swelled almost to bursting; but the superior strength of Ringwood prevailed. With a sudden and violent effort he wrenched the grasp of St. Kitts from the engine, and dashed him staggering some paces backward, where, before he could recover himself, a gushing jet of water drenched his whole person, from head to heel.

"You shall repent this, by heaven!" said the Creole, as soon as he recovered from the blindness and surprise of the shock. "It is water that drips from *me*, but *you* shall welter in blood!"

"The old story," replied Ringwood, contemptuously; "but you are freely

welcome to all you are likely to draw from me, whether at boxing, or single-stick; for of course you mean the weapons that belong to your caste."

"Ringwood!" said the Creole, with eager earnestness, "grant me one request. Promise me, by your honour, that if the stain on my birth should ever be removed, you will meet me as your equal, with the arms of gentlemen?"

"Oh, with all my heart," answered Ringwood; "there 's my hand on it;—but, mind, I must have good proof, evidence in black and white, and not in whitey-brown, that your mother was no slave among the sugar-canes. I should n't like, when I thought I was letting good blood, to find it was only treacle."

"Enough," said the Creole, with a hard squeeze of the hand that was held out to him; "remember—your honour is pledged;" and hastily turning away, the speaker sprang over the fence, which was only a paling, and disappeared. At the same moment a smothered haw! haw! haw! from behind a clump of shrubs proved that this water-scene had been observed and enjoyed by the projector of the joke.

"So here you are," said Raby, making his appearance, "in this strange out of the way corner; I fancied I heard your voice at high words with St. Kitts. Pray what was the matter?"

"Nothing at all; he only began to blaze, and so I got him under," answered Ringwood, carelessly pointing with his finger to the garden-engine. And he lounged off into the bower, where he found the deluge wiped up and his Goddess in statu quo.

During this interlude the dulness of the rest of the company had rather increased, and the gaudy flag, that still drooped motionless on its staff, seemed a proper emblem of their listless and inanimate condition.—They stood about the grounds in groups, idle, weary, and dreary, and seemed by common consent to have adopted the line of conduct of the Hon. Mr. Danvers, a sort of exclusive of those days, who, in answer to every proposition of amusement, lisped languidly, "that he preferred to look on."

"It 's very odd a man of my property can't have a merry party," thought Twigg, as he looked round on his grand to-do, and saw the festive scene with a visible damp over it, like a wet night at Vauxhall. In the bitterness of his heart he sidled up to Mrs. Twigg, who was standing near the marquee, and said to her, in a low tone, "Our friends, d—n them, are as dull as ditch-water. What the devil can we do with them?"

"Nine, ten, eleven," said Mrs. Twigg, with an abstracted look, and a little nod of her head at each number.

"What the —— is running in your fool's head, madam?" said the Master of the Hive, who was apt to use expressions not exactly cut out for the ear of our present Licenser.

"Hush;—fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen," continued Mrs. Twigg, with the action of a Mandarin. "Drat that Pompey; I know there 's more heads than plates." And she rushed off to scold the oblivious black. The poor African, indeed, during the last half hour, had fully entitled himself to receive what Twigg, junior, would have called a regular good wigging.

A breath of air displaying, for the first time, the ironmongers' banner, it was discovered that the obtuse negro had hoisted it reversed, with all the armorial bearings of that Worshipful Company standing on their heads; and in absurdly attempting to rectify this blunder, by swarming up the staff, down came Pompey, pole, flag, and all, on the dignified head of the Hon. Mr. Danvers, who was indulging his preference for looking on. His next exploit was in bowing and backing to make way for Mr. Justice Rivers, whereby he got a fair roll and tumble over Miss Bower, one of the shepherdesses, who was sitting very pastorally on the grass; and, by-and-by, recollecting some neglected previous order, he ran off headlong to execute

it, popping down a trayfull of ices to thaw and dissolve themselves into a dew, under the broiling sun. A long hundred of such little enormities were committed by the wrong-headed Hottentot; but only imagine the amazement of his mistress, when she saw him gravely conveying a reinforcement of cake and wine to the green-house in a common hand-barrow; — and conceive her still greater horror when he came back on the broad grin, with the same vehicle containing the helpless, portly body of the coachman as drunk as the celebrated sow of David. The only possible thing that could be urged in favour of the sot, was, that he was not cross in his cups, for during his progress he persisted in singing a jolly song, quite as broad as it was long, with all the voice that he had left.

"I shall faint away! — I shall go wild! — I shall die on the spot!" — exclaimed the distressed mistress of the Hive. — "I wonder where Mr. T. is? That Pompey is enough to — has any body seen Mr. T.? It is really cruel, — what can a woman do with a tipsy man? — Do run about, Peter, and look for your master, — Mr. T.! Mr. T.! Mr. T.!"

But no one responded to the invocation, although the whole grounds resounded, gradually, with an universal call for Mr. Twigg. The unhappy lady was in despair — she feared she knew not what. When she last saw him he had been worked up by successive mistakes and accidents to an awful pitch of nervous excitement, and she did not feel sure that he had not actually run away in a paroxysm of disgust and horror, leaving her, like Lady Macbeth, to huddle up the banquet as she might. At last a popping sound attracted her to the tent, and there she found the wished-for personage, cursing and swearing in a whisper, and stopping with each thumb a bottle of champagne, which had suffered so from the hot weather, that the fixed air had determined on visiting the fresh.

"Oh, Mr. T., what would you think!" — began the poor hostess, but he cut her short; and the following dialogue ensued.

"None of your clack, madam; but stop those two bottles" — and he pointed to a couple of long-necked fizzlers; "d——n it, madam, stop 'em tight, — you're making them squirt in my face. There you go agin! Where's Pompey, — where's Peter, — where's John, — what the devil's the use of servants, if they're away when you want 'em — curse the champagne! — Here's a pretty situation for a man of my property!"

"My dear, do only have a little patience —"

"Patience be hanged! I've been standing so, madam, this half hour — till I've got a cramp in both thumbs. I told that rascal John never to quit the tent, and you, madam, you, — with your confounded she-gossips — why did n't you come sooner? I'll tell you what — if ever I have a fête again — is any body happy — is any body lively — will any body shoot at the target — or dance on the lawn — or play cricket? No, says you, it's a failure, a regular failure; and as for pleasure, there an't a farthing in the pound!"

The colloquy would doubtless have proceeded much further, but for a succession of female shrieks which arose from all quarters at once, whereat leaving the champagne to take care of itself, the perplexed pair rushed out, with palpitating hearts, to inquire into the nature of this new catastrophe. And truly they beheld a sight to London-bred spectators peculiarly appalling. The human groups that occupied the lawn had disappeared, and in lieu of them, the terrific Alderney was racing about "like mad" with her head up, and her tail bolt upright and as stiff as a kitchen poker. Driven to wildness by three hours' exposure to a hot sun, and the incessant tormenting stings of insects, poor Daisy had broken her tether, or more probably it had been cut for her by young Twigg, and she immediately began that headlong gallop which cows are apt to take when goaded by the breeze-fly. After running three heats round the lawn, she naturally

made for the shades of the shrubbery, but being headed back by the gentlemen, she paused, and looked around for an instant, as if to consider; and then, making up her mind, she suddenly dashed off for the only place of shelter, and rushed headlong into the marquee. An awful crash ensued. Plate clattered, glass jingled, and timber banged! The canvass bulged fearfully on one side, and the moorings giving way, out rushed Daisy, and down fell the tent like a clap-net, decidedly catching the cold fowls, ducks, and pigeons that were under it.

A loud cry of a mixed character arose from the spectators of this lamentable catastrophe. The ladies screamed from terror; the expectant citizens bellowed from hungry disappointment, and some of the younger gentlemen, amateurs of fun, gave a shout that sounded like a huzza!

"She 's upset the tables!" shrieked Mrs. Twigg, with her arms working aloft like a telegraph's.

"And there goes every delicacy of the season," exclaimed Mr. Twigg, gazing with the stupified aspect of an under-writer at a total wreck.

"The new covers ——" groaned the lady.

"All battered and bruised — nothing but dents and bumps," added her husband, in the same tone.

"And the beautiful cut glass — not a bit of it blowed," said the hostess, beginning to whimper.

"Smash'd — shivered to atoms — curse her soul!" cried the host, with the fervour of a believer in the metempsychosis.

"My poor damask table-cloths!" moaned the mistress, with some indications of her old fainting fits.

"Hamstring her! — kill her! knock her on the head!" shouted Twigg dancing on his tiptoes with excitement, and unconsciously imitating the action of a slaughter-man.

After standing a minute at gaze, the cow had recommenced her career about the lawn, causing a general panic, and nature's first law, the *sauve qui peut* principle, triumphed over all others. Guided by this instinct, Twigg rushed into the greenhouse, and resolutely shut the door against the cow, as well as against Mrs. Twigg, who had made for the same place of refuge. The corpulent Mr. Deputy Dobbs, by hard running, contrived to place the breadth of the fish-pond between himself and the "infuriated animal," — the orchestra box, *alias* the octagon summer-house, was crowded with company, — the hermitage, oh, shade of Zimmerman, what a sacrilege! was a perfect squeeze; and Flora had clambered up the lattice-work of her temple, and sat shrieking on the top. All the guests were in safety but one; and every one trembled at the probable fate of Mrs. Tipper, who had been sitting on the end of a form, and was not so alert in jumping up from it as her juniors. The bench, on a mechanical principle well understood, immediately reared up and threw its rider; and before the unfortunate lady, as she afterwards averred, "could well feel her feet, she saw the rampaging cretur come tearing at her, with the black man arter her making her ten times worser."

The scared Alderney, however, in choosing her course, had no design against Mrs. Tipper, but merely inclined to enjoy a cold bath in the fish-pond, into which she accordingly plunged, accompanied by Pompey, who had just succeeded, after many attempts, in catching hold of the remnant of her tether. In they went — souse! — saluted by a chorus of laughter from the orchestra; and there, floundering up to their necks in water, the black animal and the red one hauled each other about, and splashed and dashed as if an aquatic parody of the combat of Guy of Warwick and the Dun Cow had been part of the concerted entertainments.

"Confound the fellow — she 'll be drown'd!" cried an angry voice from the greenhouse,

"His livery 's dish'd and done for," responded a melancholy voice from the hothouse.

"Oh! my gold-fish will be killed!" cried a shrill tone from the top of the temple; while a vaccine bellow resounded from the pond, intermingled with a volley of African jargon, of which only one sentence could be caught, and it intimated a new disaster.

"O ki! him broke all de fishin-rods and de lines!"

As Pompey spoke, he exchanged his grasp of the halter, which had become slippery, for a clutch at the tail; an indignity the animal no sooner felt, than with a desperate effort she scrambled out of the pond, and dashed off at full gallop towards the paddock, making a dreadful gap by the way in Flora's display of exotics, whether in tubs or pots. As for Pompey, through not timing his leap with the cow's, he was left sprawling under the rails of the paddock; meanwhile the persecuted Alderney finally took shelter under the shade of the haystack.

And now the company, with due caution, came abroad again from roof and shed and leafy recess, like urchins after a shower. Twigg sallied from the greenhouse, and his helpmate at the same moment issued from the forcing-house, with a face looking perfectly ripe: the octagon summer-house sent forth a congregation like that of a dwarf chapel, — the hermitage was left to the joint tenancy of Raby and Grace, and Flora descended from the roof of her temple, being tenderly assisted in her descent by the enamoured Ringwood. By common consent the company all hastened towards the fallen marquee, and clearing away the canvass, they beheld the turf variously strewed, — exactly as if Time, — that Edax Rerum, — had made a miscellaneous meal which had disagreed with him.

In the middle the tables lay on their sides with their legs stretched out like dead horses, and the bruised covers, and knives and forks, were scattered about like the battered helmets and masterless weapons after a skirmish of cavalry. The tablecloths were dappled with the purple blood of the grape; and the eatables and drinkables scattered, battered, spattered, shattered, and tattered, all round about, presented a spectacle equally whimsical and piteous. The following are but a few of the objects which the Hon. Mr. Danvers beheld when he looked on.

Item. A huge cold round of beef, surrounded by the froth of a trifle, like an island "begirt with foam," with a pigeon perched on the top instead of a cormorant.

Item. A large lobster, roosting on a branch of an epergne.

Item. A roast duck, seemingly fast asleep, with a cream cheese for a mattrass and a cucumber for a bolster.

Item. Brawn, in an ample writing-paper ruff, well sprinkled with claret, reminding the spectator irresistibly of the neck of King Charles the First.

Item. Tipsy-cake, appropriately under the table.

Item. A puddle of cold punch, and a neat's tongue apparently licking it up.

Item. A noble ham, brilliantly powdered with broken glass.

Item. A boiled rabbit smothered in custard.

Item. A lump of *blanc*-mange dyed *purple*.

Item. A shoal of prawns in an ocean of lemonade.

Item. A very fine boiled turkey in a harlequn suit of lobster-salad.

Item. A ship of sugar-candy, high and dry on a fillet of veal.

Item. A "hedge-hog" sitting on a "hen's nest." Vide Mrs. Glasse's Cookery for these confectionary devices.

Item. "A floating island," as a new constellation, amongst "the moon and stars in jelly." See Mrs. Glasse again.

Item. A large pound crab, sitting upright against a table, and nursing a chicken between its claws.

Item. A collared eel, uncoiled, and threatening like a boa constrictor to swallow a fowl.

Item. A Madeira pond, in a dish cover, with a duck drowned in it.

Item. A pig's face, with a snout smelling at a bunch of artificial flowers.

Item. A leg of lamb, as yellow as the leg of a boy at Christ's hospital, thanks to the mustard-pot.

Item. A tongue all over "flummery."

Item. An immense Macedoine of all the fruits of the season, jumbled together in jam, jelly, and cream.

Such were some of the objects, interspersed with Serpentines of sherry, Peerless Pools of port, and New Rivers of Madeira, that saluted the eyes of the expectant guests, thus untimely reduced to the feast of reason and the flow of soul. The unfortunate hostess appeared ready to drop on the spot; but, according to Major Oakley's theory, she refrained from fainting among so many broken bottles; whilst Twigg stood with the very aspect and attitude of a baker's journeyman, we once saw, just after a stumble, which had pitched five rice-puddings, two custard ditto, a gooseberry pie, a currant tart, and two dozen cheesecakes into a reservoir of M'Adams's broth from flints. The swamping of his collation on the ait in the Thames was a retail concern to this enormous wreck. His eyebrows worked, his eyes rolled, his lips quivered with inaudible curses, and his fingers twitched, as if eager to be doing something, but waiting for orders from the will; he was divided, in truth, between a dozen rival impulses, suggesting to him, all at once, to murder the cow, to thrash Pompey, to quarrel with his wife, to disinherit his son, to discharge the cooks, to order every body's carriage, to send Matilda back to boarding-school, to go to bed suddenly ill, to run away God knew where, to hang himself on the pear-tree, to drown himself in the fish-pond, to burn the marquee, to turn Infidel and deny a Providence, to get dead drunk.

It must be confessed that in some of these instances his aim was directed against very innocent individuals; but a man in a passion is never particular, any more than a hasty bottle of ginger-pop, as to who or what is to suffer by his effervescence. Calmer counsels, however, prevailed; and, assisted by Mrs. Twigg and Pompey, he set to work like a Cornish wrecker, to save all he could of the cargo. The bloodiest battle leaves some of the soldiers alive; and a decanter or two, a few glasses, plates, dishes, and other breakables, remained miraculously unhurt amidst the general havoc; a sufficient freight, indeed, for the butler's tray, which Pompey volunteered to carry into the house; but barely had the unlucky negro set foot on the threshold, when, with an exclamation of surprise, he dropped the whole brittle load at the feet of the brown woman; and, in another second, Pompey lay sprawling himself amidst the fragments, by a blow from her redoubtable hand.

After this exploit, the Queen of the Gipsies sprang down the steps, and, with the air of Moll Flaggon, danced and pranced along the lawn to the scene of havoc just described, where she began to amuse herself like a bedlamite broken out of confinement. First of all, she bowled a round of cold beef across the grass-plat, and then she sent a fillet of veal trundling after it. Next, seizing the gardener, who was collecting the fragments of the feast, she forced him to dance a round with her, ending the waltz with a trip up that laid the horticulturist on his back; anon, after a little game at foot-ball with a fowl, she threw all the cold ducks, one after another, into the fish-pond.

The company in general stood aghast at this outrageous conduct, and wondered what character it was intended to keep up; whilst others, better acquainted with the brown woman, scarcely marvelled at her violence, but felt proportionably anxious as to its ultimate extent. Mrs. Twigg ran in

doors to faint in her own room. Matilda prepared to mount to the top of her temple; the ladies retreated to the octagon summer-house and the hermitage, whilst Squire Ned, remembering the woman's partiality for sharp blades, judiciously caught up a brace of carvers from the grass, in case she should again resort, like Palafox, to "war to the knife."

"Stop her! seize her! take her up in the King's name!" cried Twigg, as he took refuge behind Mr. Justice Rivers, who was settling in his own mind the maximum of legal punishment he could inflict for this new offence against social order.

"To her, boys! to her!" shouted the gallant Sir Mark, with a corresponding movement towards the intruder; but before he had gone half way, a mask was plucked off, the womanly dress was doffed, and, instead of the Queen of the Gipsies, he beheld Twigg, junior, leering at him with a pantomimical grimace, and in an attitude borrowed from the Grimaldi of that period.

"The old fable, by Jove!" muttered the Baronet, as he stopped short, "only the ass has put on a tigress's skin instead of a lion's."

The cub replied only by a harlequin roll of the head; but it was an imprudent feat to be performed by one whose brain was already whirling of its own accord; for, like certain precocious bibbers, who contrive to fuddle themselves before the dinner-cloth is removed, he had managed to be overtaken before others had set out; the natural consequence of this extra spinning was a sudden giddiness, and after a desperate stagger, he added his bulk to the general mass of articles which, in commercial language, had experienced a considerable fall.

The wrath of Twigg was at its climax. All his terror had turned to rage, and he seemed ready for any extravagance; indeed, he was only withheld by main force from inflicting on the culprit a paternal pummelling. Nothing, however, could prevent his railing; and he actually raved at the offender, vowing to starve him, to make a beggar of him, to kick him out of the firm, and to cut him off with a shilling — and a bad shilling, too, if he coined one for the purpose. He made him over, bones, blood, and limbs, to the gallows, to the grave, to the devil.

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" interposed the oracular Deputy Dobbs; "wine, is wine, and a frolic is a frolic. Youth is youth, and we were all young once."

"Young!" ejaculated Twigg, "I wish he had never been a day old! I wish he'd been still-born! I don't know what he's had, but I wish it had choked him!"

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" repeated the Deputy. "Blood's blood, a son is a son, and a father is a father."

"I know all that," retorted Twigg; "but do n't go to excuse him; pray do n't, for it's inexcusable. Only put yourself in my place. Here I am, with every thing respectable about me, — a man of property: and where's my son and heir, that's to come into it when I'm gone? Why going to bed, confound him, intoxicated — intoxicated by three o'clock.

"Pooh, pooh, pooh," said the Deputy.

"I should n't mind," continued Twigg, "if he made a beast of himself like a gentleman. I've seen the genteelest people get tipsy towards tea-time. But here he is, unsober before dinner; no manners, no breeding, no nothing. Is any body drunk but him? No, says you, not a soul; and common politeness would dictate, the visiters first."

In this strain the indignant Ex-Sheriff was eloquently proceeding, when, suddenly, a drop of rain, as big as a bullet, fell splashing on the bald head of the deputy; and then came a flash of lightning so vivid, and a clap of thunder so astounding, that in his confusion the host himself led a retreat into the house, followed by the company en masse, the gardener and Pom-

pey, loaded with the helpless carcass of Twigg, junior, bringing up the rear. The cub was immediately consigned to his chamber, with a fervent parental wish that he might be bed-ridden for a month to come; but the mother, who had recovered from her swoon, fell into a fit of tenderness, and apologized that her poor son, being so close confined to business, was apt when he had a day's pleasure to overdo himself. "It will be a frightful storm," she added, as a fiery izzard seemed written on the distant sky, "but, thank goodness, here we all are, with a good roof over our heads."

"Not all; yonder are some that want the whipper-in," whispered Sir Mark to the Justice, at the same time directing his attention to the window; and the Magistrate's brow darkened to match the Baronet's, as Grace was seen leaning on Raby's arm, and Miss Twigg actually clinging to Ringwood, in their progress towards the house. The two fathers exchanged a gloomy and significant glance, nor did their features brighten when at the make-shift banquet which followed, the same couples chose to sit together, evidently enjoying the casual dearth of glass and china that compelled Grace and Raby to take wine from the same tumbler, and Flora and her votary to partake of fruit with only one desert plate between them. The countenance of Mrs. Twigg, on the contrary, beamed with joy and triumph at witnessing the hopeful flirtation of Matilda with the heir of the Hall; and her portrait taken at that moment would make an appropriate and admirable frontispiece to the little volume entitled "Maternal Solicitude for a Daughter's best Interests." It was not, therefore, without a torrent of entreaties, reproaches, and regrets, from the mother, and some poutings from the young lady, that the Baronet was allowed to order his carriage the moment the storm abated; and the Justice followed his example.

These departures threw an increased gloom over the company, which Twigg in vain tried to dissipate. Music was prepared, and the carpet was taken up. Matilda was sulky, and would n't sing, and Mr. Hopkinsor could n't, through a cold caught in the octagon summer-house. Mrs. Filby was grumpy about her satin gown, observing, with an angry glance at Miss Sparkes, that if people must jump at claps of thunder, they need n't jump their jellies into other people's laps; and the pedagogue of Prospect House was weary of uttering classical jokes at which nobody laughed. The Honourable Mr. Danvers began to tire of looking on. Deputy Dobbs was disappointed of his accustomed speechifying, for in spite of all his hints, Twigg set his face against toasts, not liking probably to bid gentlemen charge their glasses who had so few to charge. The rest of the Londoners began to calculate the distance of the metropolis. Doctor Cobb had been huffed by Mr. Figgins in a dispute about politics; Squire Ned, for the last half hour, had been making up his mind to steal away; and even the Crumpe family, who had come early on purpose to enjoy a long day, began to agree in their own minds, that it was the longest they had ever known. In short, every body found some good reason for going, and successively they took leave, Doctor Bellamy being the last of the guests that departed, whereby he had the pleasure, and to Old Formality it *was* a pleasure, of bowing them all out.

As the last pair of wheels rattled away, Mrs. Twigg dropped into a chair, and began to relieve her feelings by having what she called a good cry. At the same moment Twigg threw off his coat, and seizing plate, knife, and fork, began eating like a glutton for a wager, occasionally washing down ham, beef, veal, chicken, jelly, tarts, and fruit, with great gulps of brandy and water. As for Matilda, she threw herself on a sofa, as flat, inanimate, and faded, as the Flora of a Hortus Siccus.

Thus ended a fete especially devoted to enjoyment, but where the spirit of the work did not answer to its dedication. Premeditated pleasures frequently terminate in disappointment; for mirth and glee do not always care

to accept a ceremonious invitation; they are friendly familar creatures tha love to drop in. To use a mercantile metaphor, bills at long dates upon happiness are apt to be dishonoured when due.

On the morrow, John the coachman found himself out of a situation, whilst Twigg, junior, was provided with a place on the roof of the High-flyer on its road to the metropolis. Pompey was threatened also with dismissal, but as black servants are not as plenty as blackberries, the discharge was not made out; whereas, the gardener, shocked at the havoc among his exotics, and annoyed by the nickname of Jerry Blossom, which his fancy dress had entailed on him, gave warning of his own accord. The cook received a message from her mistress, who was kept in bed by a nervous complaint, that she might suit herself as soon as she pleased; the dairy-maid received a significant hint from the same source, that she must butter the family better if she wished to stay in it; and to Dolly's deep regret, her favourite Daisy, with a bad character for gentleness, was driven off to the nearest market to be sold peremptorily for what she would fetch.

CHAPTER XXIX.

What I have told you by my inspiration, I tell you once again, must and shall find you.

THE PROPHETS.

Alas, to think that Love decays,
And Friendship wears the length of days,
And hands disjoin, and hearts discover,
But hate lives, grows, and lasts for ever.

TARLTON.

If all the fathers and mothers in the world were but dead, what a merry life would love ead! No churlish dad, nor crabbed dam, to snub it and flout it, and rail at it, till Cupid is fain to skulk about in dark corners, with his wings up to his ears like a moping owl.

CUPID CROSSED.

THE vigilance which the brown woman had pledged herself to exercise on the Creole's behalf, kept pace with her promise. When St. Kitts leaped over the fence of Twigg's pleasure grounds, the first object he beheld on alighting on his feet was Marguerite, who had apparently been listening and watching the progress of the fete through a crevice in the paling. As she turned her head towards him, her brow was flushed, and her eyes were unusually bright and fierce, probably from her having been a witness of the indignity so recently offered to her foster-son. She hastily caught his arm, and with a precautionary finger on her lip, drew him aside to some distance. At last she stopped, and addressed him in a tone of mockery that matched with her words.

"We are out of sight and ear-shot in this thicket. And now, why does Walter Tyrrel shun the company of his equals and inferiors, and leave Grace Rivers to the uninterrupted attentions, and perhaps caresses, of his rival?"

"Let Ringwood answer that," said the Creole, with a glance at his clothes, glossy with wet; "I am dripping from top to toe.

"So much the better," said the woman, with a long and freezing look. "It is a new baptism. This sprinkling names you Sir Walter Tyrrel. Put up with this, and the puniest school-boy shall make you a mark for his six-penny squirt."

"Be at rest, Marguerite," said the Creole, with a significant nod and a

bitter smile. "You are spurring the willing horse. My birth cleared, Ringwood has promised to meet me."

"He shall meet *me* first," exclaimed the woman, shaking her hand aloft, as if it brandished its familiar knife. "Twice, aye, thrice have you been foiled by his arm, and would you now meet him on equal terms? But what do I talk of equal terms? Has he a mother to weep for him? Has he a foster-mother even, to break her heart for him, and die in his death? Is there a poor, lone, desolate, wretched woman, that will lose her all in Ringwood, her last joy, her last treasure on earth, and all the dearer to her that she has no puling hope of joy or treasure in heaven? Will a shrieking voice be heard in the wilderness of the world, crying Marguerite, Marguerite, where is my son — you have let him venture his precious life-blood against a red puddle? No, Walter Tyrrel, I will have no duel. When you strike, you shall strike safely; but the hour is not come. Be fair and smooth till then."

"And the papers," said the Creole; "shall I not prove my birth?"

"When others have proved their DEATH," was the emphatic answer. "Those papers were given but for the present ease of your mind; and now go, for my watch is not over. Ponder the future and the past. Remember what expelled you from yonder garden, and remember whom you left behind. Remember, but seem to forget."

After these words, and her accustomed embrace, she departed, and St. Kitts saw her go warily and resume her former position against the paling. He then returned by a short cut across the fields to the Hall, where he changed his wet clothes for dry ones, and obtained a dose of mulled wine from old Deborah, by help of which, and a book, he had regained a tolerable state of comfort and composure when the family returned. The old plea of indisposition served to account to the Baronet and Mrs. Hamilton for his abrupt departure from Hollington; and his cousins did not think proper to impeach the validity of the excuse. Neither did St. Kitts take any more notice of the affair; for an explanation, and the discovery of young Twigg's part in it, would be likely to draw an apology from the open-hearted Ringwood; and the Creole did not desire even this fraction of atonement to be set off against the gross sum of wrong which stood over for final retribution. Accordingly he conducted himself towards one brother, as though he had only been the sufferer in a boyish frolic; and to the other, as if love, rivalry, and Grace Rivers, had no earthly existence. "Fair and smooth," he repeated mentally, "fair and smooth — aye, I will be as fair and smooth to them, as thin ice beneath their feet."

In this mock harmony they returned to college; whither the heir and hope of the Hall repaired with equal resolutions to live and learn; but his fondness for sporting prevailed, and the latter design was but too soon added as another stone to that awful floor which, according to Dr. Johnson, is paved with good intentions. The new attachment which Raby carried with him, on the contrary, rather fostered than interfered with his love of literature, and he laboured hard to win academical honours, in order to lay them at the feet of his mistress; — but to the gloomy passion that accompanied the Creole all others were postponed. It grew singly and with proportionate luxuriance, and, under the undivided culture of his mind, hate threatened to become a Upas-tree of no ordinary magnitude.

In the mean time the engagement entered into by the young lovers was kept a secret from their parents, a course to which both Grace and Raby were influenced by those vague misgivings which, like summer clouds, will sometimes assemble and lower in the brightest and bluest skies. A belief in what are called presentiments is commonly treated as the superstition of a weak mind; nevertheless, those who attach weight to such forebodings have some foundation for their creed. The young and enthusiastic espe-

cially are subject to such gloomy augury, but which may be traced to a very natural cause, namely, the revulsion of over-excited feeling, and the reaction of extravagant fancy, exaggerated hopes, and impracticable schemings. The most buoyant spirit will sometimes droop, the strongest pinion will flag in a long flight, and hope be outworn by her own aspirings. In these calmer pauses, the mind, like a poet when his "fine frenzy" is over, sets itself soberly to review its work, and, as well as the author, is fain to reject here and there a vicious conceit, to amend a disjointed argument, and to abate some hyperbolical flourishes. Thus Utopian views of life are saddened down to the tone of reality, and the distempered enthusiast, darkening with his dream, instead of tracing the influence of judgment and reason in the change, attributes his ominous depression to supernatural agency. To say, therefore, that the lovers mutually laboured under a presentiment of future evil, implies merely that reflection had thrown shadows of doubt and difficulty in the way of a passion, the course of which, according to familiar tradition, never did run smooth; the possibility of parental disapprobation had especially suggested itself as a contingent obstacle, and several trivial circumstances had concurred to establish the impression that both fathers were to be numbered among the lions in their path. The mutual flame, lest it should flash on the eyes of the Baronet or the Justice, was consequently carried in a dark lantern. To one person only did the betrothed confide their engagement; and Mrs. Hamilton had suffered the misery of enforced vows too acutely in her own person to wish to cross true love, or even to cast a gloom over its first young dream. Moreover, though not a professed match-maker, the union of her two favourites was the very one that her own wishes would have induced. She concurred, therefore, in their plan of secrecy; but at the same time hermetically sealed up from them her knowledge of Sir Mark's matrimonial project, in the confident anticipation that it would be defeated by the headstrong wilfulness of Ringwood, whose growing partiality for Miss Twigg had not escaped her penetration. It required all her influence, in the mean time, to restrain her brother from interfering with the compulsory dog-couples in his hand, for he had some dim suspicion of his son and heir's pursuit; but Ringwood was young, and the fox-hunter flattered himself he could take him up at any time, like a puppy, and break him from Matilda, and enter him at Grace. On the other hand, Justice Rivers, with his extreme notions of the divine right of parents, and the obligation of passive obedience on children, relied implicitly on his own authority in case of any refractory affection on the part of his daughter, being fully determined that if she did not follow his lead, her ace of hearts, so to speak, should be trumped by his own ace of spades — the paramount card that ostentatiously imposes a duty on all the rest of the pack.

Such was the aspect of the domestic planets at the return of the collegians to Oxford, and from this period the family archives, in recording two unimportant years, may be supposed to present only as many rows of asterisks, emblematical of those fixed stars which are supposed to exercise no peculiar influence over the destinies of mankind. As in travelling, you come occasionally to some barren moor, fen, or weary waste, some Salisbury Plain, where you are fain to lean back in your carriage and get rid of the monotonous prospect by help of a doze; so in journeying through human life, blank stages will sometimes occur, deserving little passing notice or future record. In such cases the historian may be allowed to take a nap, merely looking out occasionally to report progress, instead of watching and describing every milestone as though it were a Stonehenge. Or let it be supposed that we have now come to a favourable level, or bit of hospital ground, in the language of the road, where a judicious whip always makes play, and retrieves by a gallop the time he must lose in ascending and descending

hills at other parts of the journey. Away go the four bloods, and as the inside passenger looks through the coach window he sees objects flitting by so rapidly that with an optical delusion rivalling the phantascope, a stone-breaker seems transformed into a cow in the pound, and a crow on a common into a cur at a cottage-door. The reader, hurried on with similar velocity over a flat of two years, will not therefore wonder in a few sentences to find the heir of the Hall arrived within a few weeks of his majority, and the studious Raby invested, in as short a space, with an academical degree; the former having pursued his studies so negligently as nearly to fulfil the prophecy of Dr. Burdock, by being plucked, whereas the latter had applied himself to learning with such unremitting devotion as to materially impair his health. The progress of the Creole had kept pace with Ringwood's: his mind had been given up to baneful aspirations in which the Muses had no part; and Jenkins, the tutor, in addressing Sir Mark on resigning his charge, was glad to lose sight of the deficiencies of two pupils in his congratulations on the success of the third. But whatever might be their individual obligations to the University, Ringwood was the most indebted to Oxford, for he owed a sum there that he only cared to confess, as some people pay, by instalments, and he had only thus owned to about fifty per cent. of the amount, when the Baronet became so angry that this prodigal son was glad to accept a voluntary offer from Squire Ned, to lend him the rest till he came into his own. The excesses by which these bills had been incurred had in vain been deprecated by the more prudent Raby, but his remonstrances and entreaties produced no other effect than to render their accustomed bickerings more bitter and frequent than ever, and, thanks to the skilful stirring up of St. Kitts, their brotherly broils were never done by a slow fire. The Creole's own temper indeed began to give way under the capricious dominion of his foster-mother, who, by alternately checking and spurring, had at length put him completely on the fret; and while he exulted in the sound of contest between his cousins, he chafed at the curb which restrained him from plunging at once into the fray. During the last two years many items of wrong and insult had been added to the dark columns he kept, in anticipation of a day of reckoning; and, by the fiendish estimate of revenge, the amount, like the national debt, seemed getting too vast to be redeemed. His fate for life, moreover, was coming to its crisis. A general war was raging throughout Europe, and Sir Mark had not altered his intention of introducing his nephew into the army, a profession for which St. Kitts had a peculiar distaste, without a particular relish for any other. It was with no military view then that at Oxford, in lieu of more scholastic acquirements, he had devoted himself to the study of fencing, and with such earnestness of purpose and incessant practice, that he became as perfect a master of the sword as Angelo himself.

To the Baronet, the Creole's classical acquirements were matter of indifference: he conceived that a knowledge of Greek and Roman tactics could be of little service to a general since the invention of gunpowder, and was content that his nephew should have the credit of having been to college; whereas the deficiencies of his son and heir gave him a great deal of pain, and consequently Ringwood found himself out of his father's favour. But this was a saddle he soon regained; and the inferior figure he made among the black coats was forgotten in the pre-eminence which he displayed amongst those of scarlet or green. The literary honours of Raby, in spite of the contrast they suggested, were, however, a source of both pride and gratification to his parent; but the wan thin cheeks, dim eyes, and attenuated figure that deposed to the severity of his study, excited Sir Mark's serious displeasure. He insisted more peremptorily than ever that the bookworm should betake himself to the sports of the field; and Mrs. Hamilton strenuously recommended the same course, not merely for healths'

sake, but that the son might propitiate the father, to whose matrimonial plan he was unconsciously running counter; above all, Grace herself urged the change so earnestly, that Raby, with a smile and a sigh, promised to study the part, and appear in this new character in the domestic drama.

In the mean time the God of Love plied peaceably between the Hall and Hawksley and Hollington, without any hostile interruption from the God of Marriage. Strange as such a collision may appear between Cupid and Hymen, it is too certain that in modern times these twin torch-bearers sometimes wrangle and fight before a lady and gentleman, like a pair of dirty little blackguard link-boys contending for a customer. Thanks to a succession of murders, arsons, treasons, burglaries, highway robberies, and other capital crimes, of which there is never a dearth in civilized countries, Justice Rivers, during two busy years, had been too much occupied with the criminal noose to think of the matrimonial one, and his daughter consequently still remained in happy ignorance of the match which had been made in her behalf. The Baronet, more at leisure to take notes, had detected Ringwood's penchant for Miss Twigg; but the undisguised effort of the mother to further the flirtation, comfortably persuaded him that it was a mere dead set at his son, whom he compared to a bull at a baiting. "They thought they had got him," he said, "safely tied to a ring; and to be sure the girl went well at his head, and there was no want of heying her on; but when it came to the pinning there might be a spin in the air, and so forth, and he'd advise Mrs. Twigg to make a back ready to break the poor thing's fall.

In this assurance he delivered himself up to pleasing anticipations, and, assisted by Squire Ned, with whom he was daily closeted, he gave all his cares to the preparations for an impending festival on Ringwood's coming of age, an event which promised a day of jubilee to the whole household, with the exception of Tibbie, who gloomily looked forward to the coming celebration as a sort of Belshazzar's Feast."

"Ou mem," exclaimed the Scotchwoman, at a private opportunity with her mistress, "Ou mem, after word comes weird; there's a black day coming doon upon us at the last. Lordsake, mem, let's be aff to cannie Glencosie! Let's flee awa' hame like a leddy-launner — for it will be a sair sight to bide. Wae's me! we'se a' be ruined stoop an' roop?"

"If you mean, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "the rejoicings at my nephew's coming of age —"

"Oh that's just it, mem," interrupted Tibbie, with a look as if she had seen a wraith, and a shudder as though she had just been well ducked by a water-kelpie. "Did I ever think to see 'O for ane an' twenty Tam' danced to siccan a daft tune? They say your nevoy's comin' intil a hantle o' siller, and sae a hantle mair is to be fuled awa' to mak' room for't! Ech, sirs, to skirl awa' ae bawbee for gleesomeness at getting anither, isna that braw guiding o' gear?"

"Never fash your thumb, Tibbie," said the lady, who, in conversation with her follower, liked to gratify the Scotchwoman with some of her national phrases. "There's siller enough to carry us well through the plea; and a little will be left besides, I hope, to give Raby a birth-day too, when his turn comes."

"The Lord grant it, mem," answered Tibbie, with an incredulous shake of her head. "Ilka man maun sit on his ain coat-tail, but folk are forgetfu' whiles o' the length o' the pouch. Gude kens, siller can rin awa' fast eneuch on its ain legs, like a Jock-wi-the-mony-feet, without pittin' wings till't. Aiblins, mem, ye'll no have heard the tae hauf o' the caraffle, but I ken brawly — for I airted it out mysel'."

"And what have you heard, Tibbie," inquired Mrs. Hamilton, "that

makes ye expect such a kill-cow? But I suspect Jerry has been treating you with more statements than he can vindicate."

"Hout awa'!" exclaimed the indignant handmaid. "Jerry, indeed! I wad like to see the hale clan o' Jerries wha could veendicate Tibbie Cawmel! She has twa lugs o' her ain, and didna Sir Mark Tirl gie orders aboot the vivers when I was by? But ye were speering, mem, anent a kill-cow. What div ye think of roastit owsen — nae flesher-wark, nae parting o' foresey and backsey and heukbane, — but roasted hale, mem; muckle stirks, wi' true-luve knots o' blue ribbons at their tails, and their horns glinting wi' laid gowd. If that isna a kill-cow I kenna what is."

"I remember to have seen something of the kind," said Mrs. Hamilton, "when my brother, Sir Mark, came into his estates."

"And the Lord haud him and the estates thegither!" ejaculated Tibbie, with the fervent air of one invoking a miracle. "It wad be an awfu' thing for the Ha' to be roupit, stock and brock; for I jalouse Sir Mark's no the precese sort o' man to save ony thing by a moonlight flitting."

"The moon must be made of green cheese, indeed, ere we come to that," said the mistress.

"Aweel, mem," answered Tibbie, "there's no saying. I kenned a blue-gown, wha was ance a cock laird. There's gowpen gowd to the fore nae doot, but I'm thinking the King himsel' wad be scant o' siller for the tow-mont to come, after siccan an outlay. Ben the house, and but the house, it's a' ane. There's to be lang boards outbye in the policy, wi' meat for ilka mou', and lang settles eneuch for a' the doups in the parishric. My troth, I wuss we havena to sup lantern-kail and pree barefut-broth, after siccan a hirdum-dirdum!"

"And, of course," suggested Mrs. Hamilton, "so much meat will want a little drink along with it."

"Ou ay, mem," answered Tibbie eagerly, "the yill, nae sma' trash, but the best o' the browst, the yill's to be as free as dyke-water. Gin the hale clamjamfry dinna get roarin' fou' it canna be wyted on huz. And there's to be flags, and letting aff cannons — and musickers and jowing o' bells — and a King Solomon's Temple — gude forgie's — blawn up wi' fluffgibs! And there's to be lamps burnin' blue and red and green ule, — and the loch, mem — the loch's to be turn'd into toddy, nae less, and a chield in a coble wi' a wheen quaichs and bickers —"

"Is to serve it out to the young Squire's health," said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing. "And well may the boatie row, say I, that rows to such a good purpose. So away to your own bed, lass, and dream over a dream, one half of which at least is likely to come true."

Thus dismissed, Tibbie retired, drawing the chamber-door after her, but not so suddenly as to prevent the words "wasterie" and "red-wud" and "down-come," from slipping in before it closed.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Ho! more wine! — drink, lads, drink. Never spare the claret, there 's more a growing. At sea, when a ship crosses the Line, the sailors make a jubilee, and we 'll have ours upon land. Have I not crossed to-day the line that divides boyhood from manhood, and makes me my own master? Ho! more wine, I say! jacks, flagons, and canns!"

THE HEIR.

There hath risen betwixt us
An immortality of Hate. Old Time
Shall sink to dotage and forget himself,
And Pity cling unto an usurer's heart,
Ere he and I grow friends.

B. CORNWALL.

Above all, be cool. Never draw the trigger hastily and at random, but take a good sight of your mark, and then pull, *if you wish to kill.*

THE YOUNG SHOOTER'S GUIDE.

THE festive preparations announced by Tibbie in the last chapter, although exaggerated in some instances by the force of imagination, were likely in the aggregate rather to exceed than to fall short of her description. It was sufficient to ensure this result that the Baronet had such a Heydegger or master of the revels as Squire Ned, whose multifarous talents in mechanics, hydraulics, and pyrotechnics, were all put into requisition, or rather would have been called out, if they had not of themselves volunteered to do honour to the grand field-day at the Hall. On a mound in the park he planted a battery, which was to fire twenty-one rounds in token of his favourite's majority, and the yacht on the lake was provided with a bevy of flags of all nations, to be hoisted at sunrise. A balloon of his own construction, and balloons were then in their infancy, was to ascend from the grounds: he planned an exhibition of fire-works worthy of a Hengler or Southby, and invented a sudden illumination, which forestalled the discovery of gas. In fact, the Squire was allowed to have out-done himself; but it was a labour of love, for the festival was in honour of his adopted son, and he halted to and fro, lent a maimed hand to every thing, and inspected the whole with his one eye as vigilantly and critically as any other overseer could have done with two. He even took up his pen, with him a very rare implement, and made out a list of healths and sentiments to be given after dinner, some of the latter being equally original and energetic; nay, he actually attempted the composition of a song appropriate to the occasion, but his muse broke down in the very first verse, probably distressed and puzzled by his habitual elisions of the personal pronouns.

Another bard, however, volunteered to supply the deficiency — an idle, dissipated fellow, formerly under-usher at the free-school, from which he had been expelled for his bacchanalian propensities, and turning village laureate, he wandered from tap to tap roaring original ballads, for which he was rewarded with gin and porter in lieu of sack. But, although he served nine mistresses, they could jointly afford him but a very shabby suit of black livery, and the fluttering state of his rags procured him the popular nickname of Tom Tatters. This dilapidated Dryden composed a Birth-day Ode for the festival, and remembering the proverb about "a day after the Fair," he took care to recite it a day or two beforehand, and rambled all over the parish, with a mob of boys at his heels, ranting his provincial Pindarics. A torn and soiled MS. copy, still extant, serves to show that besides a characteristic mixture of the ex-usher and the Bacchanalian, it united the absurd combinations of the celebrated "Groves of Blarney," with satirical allusions and pointed personalities. As it was popular orally, it may be tried in print.

"Come all you jolly dogs in the Grapes, and King's Head and Green Man, and Bell taps,
And shy up your hats — if you have n't hats, your paper and woollen caps,
Shout with me and cry Eureka! by the sweet Parnassian river,
While Echo, in Warner's Wood replies, Huzza! the young Squire for ever!
And Vulcan, Mars, and Hector of Troy, and Jupiter and his wife,
And Phœbus, from his forked hill, coming down to take a knife,
And Mercury, and piping Pan, to the tune of "Old King Cole,"
And Venus, the Queen of Love, to eat an ox that was roasted whole.
* * * * * * *

Sir Mark, God bless him, loves good old times, when beards wag, and every thing goes merry,
There 'll be drinking out of grace-cups, and a Boar's head chewing rosemary,
Maid Marian, and a morris dance, and acting of quaint Moralities,
Doctor Bellamy, and a hobby horse, and many other Old Formalities.
* * * * * * *

But there won't be any psalm-singing saints, to make us sad of a Monday.
But Bacchus will preach to us out of a barrel, instead of that Methodist Bundy.
We 'll drink to the King in good strong ale, like souls that are true and loyal,
And a fig for Mrs. Hanway, chamomile, and sage, and penny-royal;
And a fig for Master Gregory, that takes tipsy folks into custody,
He was a wise man to-morrow, and will be a wiser man yesterday.
* * * * *

Come fill a bumper up, my boys, and toss off every drop of it,
Here 's young Squire Ringwood's health, and may he live as long as Jason,
Before Atropos cuts his thread, and Dick Tablet, the bungling mason,
Chips him a marble tea-table, with a marble tea-urn a-top of it.
Quoth Tom in Tatters."

Extraordinary, indeed, was the excitement that was produced throughout the parish, and almost throughout the county, by the announcement of the intended merrymaking at Tylney Hall. It would be intruding — unwisely intruding — on the peculiar province of Miss Mitford, to attempt to describe the commotion of the village; how rustic flirts and coquettes ogled their own pretty faces in round, oval, triangular, square, and nine-bob-square looking-glasses, or pieces of looking-glass; and how Polly Hicks discovered that yellow suited a brown complexion, and Peggy Bland, that pink ribbons looked well among carroty curls. Dear Mary Russel only could correctly enumerate what country cosmetics came into request, such as buttermilk for tan and freckles — honey dew, gathered at sunrise, for red hands and arms, and home-made pomatum, for refractory stubble hair. She, alone, who distinguishes with fine discriminative touches the genuine natural pastoral barn-door Rosina, from the Rosina that is town-made, she only could portray worthily the workings of feminine hopes, fears, jealousies, and vanities, which kept all the rural maids, wives, and widows of * * * in a ferment. Faded satins were dipped in turmeric and logwood — rusty gauzes were refreshed with vinegar and stale table-beer. Female dresses were bought, sold, and exchanged — cleaned, dyed, and altered. Tall mothers, figuratively speaking, were cut down into dumpy daughters; spare aunts were let out with new breadths into fat nieces, and big sisters were tucked and taken in till they became little ones. The hoarded costume of a century back was ransacked to deck modern beauties, and sometimes the suits of three or four generations contributed to make up a single dress — for example, Miss Giblett had a mother cap with grandmother lappets, an aunt boddice, a great-aunt laced apron, and a great-grandmother skirt. Moreover, the dairy savings and farm-yard perquisites were laid out in fashionable millinery and cheap jewellery, so that Miss Rackstraw might be said to have a necklace of new-laid eggs — Miss Blossom, a

tippet of fresh butter, and Miss Rugby, a new gown of fatted chickens, trimmed with green-gosling ribbons, and flounced with turkey-poults. As for Miss Bilberry, she determined to go in her riding-habit, as the best habit she had.

There was a dab-wash in every house. At each basement window stood a female, ironing or clear-starching; and even towards the dinner hour, the copper flue outsmoked the kitchen chimney. Muslin lay bleaching on the grass-plots, the currant-bushes were festooned with lace, and the dwarf yews seemed literally setting their caps at the passer-by.

The Strephons, and Lubins, and Colins, in the interim were not idle; scarlet waistcoats and pea-green coats and yellow leathers were had out and aired and brushed; and little Tidmarsh the tailor had so many orders that he was obliged to take on extra hands, by whose help he was enabled to send home a dozen new suits, so *nonfitting* that, like the poet, they seemed rather to have been "born than made." More than one yeomanry uniform was called out for service, and Mr. M'Farlane, a tenant recently settled on the estate, actually wrote to Edinburgh for some of the tartan of his clan. The bellringers practised daily, and the rustic choir of Tylney Church preciously rehearsed a Christmas Carol in case they should be called upon to sing. A few practised cudgel-play, in anticipation of a gold-laced cocked hat, and about as many went into training in wrestling, presuming upon an embroidered belt. Some hoped for a pig with a soaked tail; others prayed for a race in sacks; many speculated on a jackass race, and one chowder-headed hawbuck expressed a wish that there might be a bull-baiting in the park. With the sporting small farmers who joined the hunt, Ringwood was a great favourite; and they subscribed twenty-one guineas for a piece of plate to be presented to him on his birth-day; but the most memorable tribute was from Jacob Giles, a widower of a month old, who emphatically declared "he 'd be dom'd if he wud n't goo to tha feast without his hatband!"

To the distempered mind of the Creole, these festive preparations suggested ideas which roused every rankling feeling in his bosom. He was about to see his enemy inaugurated in a sort of vice-royalty over those broad domains which he himself had been taught to covet; and he cursed in his heart the loud glee with which the menials and the tenantry anticipated the day of jubilee. Even his faith in Marguerite faltered sometimes as he saw Ringwood careering before him full of high spirits and vigorous health, one of the handsomest, hardiest, and best-limbed young men in the county; and the soul of St. Kitts sank within him as he asked himself the question whether the prophecy that hailed him as Sir Walter Tyrrel, might not palter with him in a double sense; nor did it tend to allay his perturbation, that in spite of his continual rambles in the environs, he failed to meet with his foster-mother, whose vigilance ought naturally to have brought her into the vicinity of the Hall at such a crisis. Thus, although, as necessity and policy dictated, he wore a smooth exterior, he was inwardly like the Spartan thief with a concealed fox gnawing at his very vitals: but as the time flew on — as the hated Ringwood drew nearer and nearer to his day of glory — as his eye beamed with joy, his cheek flushed with delight, and his voice took a trumpet-tone of triumph — the fox became a wolf.

Another trial awaited his vexed spirit. The Baronet, Mrs. Hamilton, Raby, the Justice, Grace Rivers, and Squire Ned, had severally prepared gifts of affection and friendship to be presented to Ringwood on his birth-day; and the Creole's brow darkened as he remembered that a similar offering would be expected at his hands. The idea of what seemed to him in the light of an act of homage to his cousin was bitter as wormwood, and especially as he had no such fatal gift to bestow as the shirt of Nessus, or the arrows that reduced Philoctetes to worse than death. "Never!" he

muttered, "never! They may make me a walking figure in his mummery, but not a prominent actor. Shall I fawn upon him, and wish him long life — I, that would willingly risk mine to take his? Shall I offer him tokens of remembrance? Remembrance! — the memory of slanderous contumely — of foul wrongs — of infamous violence. Besides, witness my horse — he would rather seize a Cadeau from me than accept one. No, let those that list shout Ringwood for ever — they know not that all their joy is shed like sunshine on a gravestone — for I will still hope that hope — and that all the brightness and glory which now surround their idol, are but as the phosphorescence of a putrid carcass!"

In a milder spirit, and sympathizing more naturally with the scene around him, Raby forgot, or postponed, all subjects of difference with his brother. Hitherto he had received no hint of the paternal project which assigned Grace over to Ringwood; and even with such knowledge, the obvious partiality of the latter for Miss Twigg would have disarmed him of all thoughts of jealousy or rivalry. A partaker, therefore, of the general good-will and affection towards the hero of the fete, he not only prepared his own gift for the occasion, but resolved to give an especial proof of the interest he took in the event. He had promised to turn, or at least try to turn, a sportsman, a course that involved some sacrifice of feeling, for his sensitiveness on the deprivation of animal life has been already recorded; and it seemed to him that if any thing could counterbalance the pain of first acting against his scruples, it would be the gratification of making his maiden offering of game at the family festival.

With these views he sought a repository of arms at the head of the hall stairs, and which Ringwood had been accustomed to call his "Sporting Magazine." It was a gallery which might truly have been christened a shooting gallery; for, instead of old family portraits, the usual ornaments of such places, it was hung round with sporting weapons of various age and fashion. Here depended a cross-bow, murderously familiar to the rookery; a cluster of peacock's plumes being drawn between the string and its polished steel arch. There rested a self yew long-bow with its quiver of yard-long arrows, and beneath it an Indian bow, painted and gilded, and curving to and fro like a snake. Beside these hung an antique sword, with a black horn handle, curiously carved, the nut-brown blade being indented with a reynard in outline, illustrative of the old dramatic invocation to a sword of "Come out, fox." On the opposite wall gleamed the bright barrels of muskets and fowling-pieces, single and double, rifles of different make, horse pistols and pistols for duelling. A legion of supplementary hooks and nails served for the deposit of shot-belts, powder-horns, and what the graphic Mr. George Robins would call an infinity of sundries. The third side contained angling and trolling rods, landing nets, and all the apparatus of the fisherman; and each wall was furnished with appropriate stuffed specimens of feræ naturæ that had been killed on the estate.

Here, then, Raby, for the first time in his life, bestowed his serious thoughts upon a gun, and took some interest in knowing its barrel from its butt-end. Casting a bewildered eye from one mysterious implement to another, he took each after each into his hand, and endeavoured with all the might of his mind to acquire what Dr. Watts, in his Logic, so strenuously recommends to a young student, namely, "a knowledge of things." At last he made choice of a weapon, and just as he was reaching out his hands towards a regulation musket, which, at the approach of the war, had served in the county militia, the Creole glided quietly to his elbow.

"Not that Brown Bess," said St. Kitts, "unless you contemplate a campaign on the continent. Take my single gun yonder, it 's a killing barrel at sixty yards."

"I wish to try one of Ringwood's," answered Raby; and taking up

another weapon, he began to examine it with a deliberate minuteness, which implied that he wanted the scrutiny to outlast the unwelcome presence of his observer. But the patience of the Creole was like that of Job, and after a tedious cross-examination of the gun, Raby was fain to transfer his attentions to another, a double barrel, which, after a very mature consideration, he seemed inclined to select.

"Be sure your flints are good," said the Creole, taking the gun as he spoke from the other's hand, and drawing back the hammer to full-cock, he pulled the trigger. An explosion instantly followed that made all the sporting implements clatter against the wall, whilst Raby started a pace or two backward. "Good God, St. Kitts!" he exclaimed, "do you want to kill me?" and a foul suspicion glanced across his brain, which seemed to vibrate with his nerves.

"If I did," answered the Creole, calmly, "I flatter myself I could take a truer aim than that;" and he pointed to the marks which the charge had made in the ceiling at the opposite end of the gallery.

Raby made no answer, but proceeded to reload the piece, tacitly rejecting a motion of assistance that was tendered by St. Kitts. Pressing back the spring of a powder-flask, he suffered an unlimited portion of the contents to pass into the barrel, which it occupied some five or six inches deep, and then pouring in a quantity of shot, ad libitum, he covered all with a couple of wads and rammed down. St. Kitts watched the operation in silence, and suffered the other even to advance some steps with this desperate load in the weapon, before he interfered in his usual quiet tone.

"If I wished your injury, Raby, I might safely leave it to your own hand. The best barrel of proof ever made would shiver to atoms with such a charge as you have just crammed into that gun upon your shoulder."

Raby, with some trepidation, prepared to rid his hands of the dangerous burthen, when the Creole, taking the gun, drew the charge, and then inviting the other to observe the proper method, he reloaded the barrel with the appropriate measures of powder and lead. A hot blush passed over Raby's face, as he recalled his unworthy suspicions, and he promptly and gratefully accepted the Creole's offer to accompany him in his intended expedition.

It was one of those fine evenings in September, when the sun with a peculiar glow burns upon the first brown and yellow tints of autumn, making amends, by apparent warmth to the eye, for the actual decrease of heat with the wane of the year. The hour was one favourable to the sportsman. The hares, leaving their forms, began to steal out of cover, and the partridges were feeding and calling to each other: but in vain puss and birds presented themselves in every variety of course or flight. Raby, besides being nervous, was rather short-sighted; and before he could recover from the flurry of the hare's sudden bolt, and the alarming whirr of the covey, the game was far out of range, if not actually beyond his sight. After repeated failures, it was agreed that they should repair to the warren, as a forlorn hope, for a couple or two of rabbits would be better than nothing, and provided the tyro was not nice about shooting Bunny standing or squatting, or rearing up on his hind legs to look about him, or to cat-wash his little round face, there was an even chance that Raby might carry home a few coneys.

At one extremity of the park there was an extensive piece of rough waste ground, of about twenty acres, which had never been brought into cultivation, on account of its value as a noted harbour for snipes, which seemed to take a special delight in its rushy plashes. At the northern extremity the ground rose rather abruptly into a mount, known as the one-tree hill, from a remarkable oak which occupied its summit. The whole of this

eminence was undermined by a vast quantity of wild rabbits, which early in the morning and at sunset were seen browsing and sporting in considerable numbers. In this direction Raby and his cousin leisurely sauntered, under cover of an irregular belt of plantation which skirted the waste ground I have already mentioned. The dogs were kept at heel, and, for fear of alarming their prey, the young men spoke seldom, and in whispers; but in spite of this precaution, the eye of Raby, unaccustomed to detect such objects, discerned little of the timid dusky gray animals, whose flight was indicated from time to time by the finger of his companion, save the distant white gleam of a departing tail. Thus they walked past the brow of the hill without a single shot; they then visited Old Sarum and Gatton, for so Ringwood had christened two especially rotten parts of the said eminence, but still without seeing any sitting borough member who might be forced to accept Chiltern Hundreds of number four. There remained but to try a level of scarcely an acre beyond the mount; and here the Creole, by signs, directed the gunner to take his station behind some brushwood, and told him to keep watch over a small open plot, bounded, at about fifteen yards distance, by fern that was breast-high. They had hardly been thus ambushed for five minutes, when a movement took place in a pitch of fern lofty above the rest, a stir that could not be attributed to the wind, for there was scarcely a breath of air. The Creole pointed it out to his companion, and in a whisper gave him his directions. "Powder costs little; we must take chance shots. You see that tall thistle; aim about a yard below it, where you see the stir."

Raby shot in the direction recommended, his finger at once pulling both triggers, and the report of two barrels mingled as one. Instantly a shriek, louder than rabbit ever cried in its agony, rent the air. The tall fern was dashed about by the convulsive tossings of human limbs, and in a few seconds the body of a man rolled out of the dense herbage into the open space. The recoil of a gun, the flash, and the loud report, had produced their full effect on the nerves of Raby; but horror rooted him to the spot, when, as the smoke cleared away, he saw the convulsed frame of his victim now drawn up till the knees met the face, and then inversely arched till the body rested merely on the heels and the back of the head.

The struggle lasted not long: this motion ceased, and the petrified homicide was enabled to recognise, in the countenance of his victim — the features of RINGWOOD TYRREL!

CHAPTER XXXI.

My brother,
Awake!—why liest thou so on the green earth?
'T is not the hour of slumber:—why so pale?
What hast thou? thou wert full of life this morn!
* * * * Who makes me brotherless? ——
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes;
And yet I feel it not.—His heart!—his heart!—
Let me see, doth it beat?—methinks—No! no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world.—

BYRON'S CAIN.

LIKE a warrior in battle struck suddenly down and stunned by a heavy mace, and then restored to consciousness by the grinding thrust of a sharp spear; so did Raby recover from the stupor of the first shock but to a

more piercing sense of anguish, as he became fully aware of the miserable deed he had done. He stood entranced — motionless and mute, for words are inadequate to such woes. There are intense moments when man becomes a giant in suffering, and needs a Titanic language to vent such enormous sorrow, stupendous horror, and vast despair. The earth seemed reeling beneath him, the sky was whirling round his head, and his ears were stunned as with the rushing of mighty waters. It was an appalling mood of mind, to which nothing could bring relief but instant madness, by deluding his sense of sight and translating the bleeding object before him into some less terrible vision.

The movement of St. Kitts, who ran and raised up the sufferer in a sitting posture, restored the wretched fratricide to recollection. With an indescribable cry he rushed and threw himself on his knees before his brother, eagerly gazing with his face opposed to the dying one, gasping by sympathy as he gasped, and unconsciously copying every convulsive working of the features with frightful fidelity. "Speak to me, Ringwood," he murmured, "speak, for the love of Christ!" but the answer was the mortal rattle in the throat, the eyes suddenly grew opaque, and the head dropped on the bosom. The charge had been received in the chest, and the blood flowing inwardly, had filled the lungs.

"There passed the spirit!" said the Creole, with a natural shudder; "he is dead."

"Oh no — no — no," groaned Raby, and instinctively he passed his hand from the mouth to the wrist, and thence to the heart; but there was no breath, no pulsation; and hope, which had prompted the test, recoiled with the benumbing shiver which nothing but the contact of death, that awful torpedo, can communicate. His whole frame shook with a violence that threatened dissolution; a cold sweat broke out in large beads upon his brow — nature could bear no more: and clasping his bursting temples between his hands, he dropped like a stone upon the turf.

From this swoon he was recovered by St. Kitts, and for some minutes his look was so vague and vacant, and his brow so calm, that reason seemed actually to have merged in idiotcy; but as the cruel truth again dawned upon him, he fell into the former ecstacy, and springing to his feet, and wildly stretching his arms abroad, as if in appeal to the whole wide earth and sky, he burst into a melancholy cry of "Oh God! what shall I do!' and again, and again, and again it was repeated, as a thousand diverging thoughts concentrated afresh in the same dreadful focus.

"You must fly," said the Creole, in a thrilling whisper, as if the Avenger of Blood were already at hand. "This will be called murder — would to heaven, Raby, you had lived on better terms with your brother!"

"Oh, it is too true!" exclaimed Raby, wringing his hands till the blood started under the nails, as he resigned himself to the pangs of that bitter self-reproach with which the living are apt to contemplate all bygone differences with the dead. "But I loved him — better than my own life. I loved him — and oh, that I were now lying there in his stead! Yes," he continued, "he was good, kind, generous, noble — the best of brothers;" and grasping the lifeless hand, he riveted his eyes on the pallid features, now settling into a placid smile, as frequently happens to the physiognomy, where death has resulted from a gunshot wound.

"Raby," said the Creole, and his voice sounded supernaturally hollow — "the dead are dead, and the living must not be lost — rise up and away!"

"No," replied Raby, "I will not stir. Come what may, this is my proper place, and till the tomb bars me from him, thus will I sit at his head as his chief mourner."

"This is mere madness," replied the Creole, in a sharper tone, and with

a gesture of impatience. "The cry of murder will rise hotly against you — blood will demand blood — and your own parent even will not be able to save you. One son is gone, and if another must follow, at least spare us the spectacle of an ignominious death. For your father's sake — for the sake of one still dearer — "

Raby groaned at this new blow, and dropped his brother's hand. Mechanically he rose up and turned his eyes towards Hawksley, and scalding tears for the first time gushed from the parched lids, as he thought of the young, fond, joyous heart he was doomed to break. Something he tried to say, but the sound died upon his lips; his head drooped, his arms dropped powerless by his side, and he assumed at once the despairing attitude and expression of a wretch who had just stepped irretrievably over the threshold of that tremendous portal, in Dante, beyond which hope has not even a name.

"Hark — a shot!" exclaimed the Creole, in an under-tone; the keeper is going his rounds — if you remain here you are lost;" and he seized the arm of Raby, and partly by force led him from the fatal spot. The condition of the latter was truly pitiable, and to estimate it the reader must consider not merely the harrowing circumstances of the time, but the peculiar morbid sensibility and constitutional nervous temperament of the individual, which combined to deprive him of all ordinary firmness. In utter prostration of mind and body, with a complete paralysis of purpose, and the absolute apathy of despair, he implicitly abandoned himself to the guidance of St. Kitts, acquiescing with child-like obedience in his suggestions, and even servilely imitating the motions and gestures of his conductor. From a rational being he seemed at once reduced to passive imbecility — a mere automaton with no original motive or springs of action — but abjectly dependent on the will of another. As they passed across the open space to regain the hill, the Creole pointed to a dead rabbit that lay on the grass, with the blood still fresh upon a small wound on the nape of the neck.

"There lies the germ of this calamity," he said; "a pole-cat has been here recently, and Ringwood was watching for it in the fern."

Raby made no answer, but abstractedly stopped and picked up the rabbit, and would have carried it away with him if St. Kitts had not taken it from his helpless hand and thrown it in the bushes. The slayer was almost as unconscious as the slain; the blow had stunned him, and reduced all his faculties to a state of torpor; he heard, without comprehending, the representations that were made to him of the necessity of flight, but blindly hurried on with fixed bewildered eyes, and open-mouthed, like a somnambulist under the influence of a horrid dream.

Their course lay through a plantation on the verge of the estate, the Creole cautiously leading in an opposite direction to that in which an occasional shot indicated the course of the gamekeeper. At length they reached a sequestered spot called the Dell-hole, from a circular hollow in the midst, a notorious haunt of the woodcock, and but a few paces distant from a furze hedge and a dry ditch which divided this part of the enclosed land from the open forest. Here St. Kitts made a sudden halt, and addressed his stupified companion in a tone of solemn decision.

"Raby, rouse yourself and listen: this is no time to juggle you with vain hopes, or to lull you with a mockery of comfort, or to blind your eyes with false views of the past or the future. One bolt has fallen, and another is in the air redder and fiercer even than the first, — one that will burst on the heads that are dearest to you with tenfold ruin. Ringwood is gone, but he died not the death of a felon. There may be comfort for one calamity, but the other will bring down gray hairs to the grave with disgrace as well as sorrow. It is a bitter doom, but you must fly! yes, fly your country! My heart bleeds for you, but the scaffold must be shunned, even were you

to become an exile for ever. Would to God you had been the first-born of your father, the heir of his estates, — but for the younger to kill the elder! — we live in a cruel world, Raby, and the evil-minded will hint at murder and quote precedents. Innocence will be stained like guilt; public justice will be clamorous for atonement, and the rash verdict of passion and prejudice may direct the very lands of your forefathers to be polluted by the erection of a gibbet. No, you must fly this infamy. I know the ties that bind you, but for the sake of Grace Rivers herself, you will fly, though it should be as the breaking of your heart-strings; let her weep but not blush for you. Away, ere it be too late; away, ere your brow be stamped for ever with the brand of Cain. After a lapse of years suspicion may revise its thoughts, and judgment may reverse its verdict; but till then you must shun a certain doom, and ignominy worse than death!"

During this discourse the unfortunate being it was addressed to became gradually conscious of its purport, and as his mind comprehended the bitter and apparently inevitable alternative that was proposed to him, the workings of his countenance expressed how excruciating were the pangs that racked his heart and brain, as he contemplated and acknowledged the stern necessity of an instant separation from all that remained to him in life or love.

It was once affirmed by a lady who had been recovered from drowning, that during the hovering of her spirit, as it were, between two worlds, she had a revelation of her past life, even in its minutest incidents, spread before her inward eye, like a pictorial chart, long forgotten circumstances displaying themselves as vividly as at the time of their actual occurrence. Even thus did Raby's prophetical imagination place before him in one vast design the dark prospect of the future, with all its sombre architecture, terrible as the Hall of Eblis, peopled with dreadful shapes of misery and despair. The drooping form of his bereaved parent, the decay of his widowed aunt, and the withering decline of Grace, all the weary wo and progressive effects of years, were forestalled in a moment, and his soul was stricken beforehand with the hopeless grief of the mourner, and the marble chill of the tomb. The thought of tearing himself from such ties was agony; but in another compartment of the same gloomy vision he beheld the opprobrious gibbet, with his own infamous remains swinging aloft, and given for a prey, like carrion, to the fowls of the air. He saw the fiends of Hatred, Malice, and Scorn, dancing and gibbering round the fatal tree, and dragging his parent, and another distracted figure, to gaze on the hideous spectacle. Even yet he might have wavered, but for a startling voice that came breathing terrible words of accusation and denunciation, as if epitomising the execrations of the world, and pronouncing its sentence.

"Away!" it cried; "away, you foul murderer, you cruel Cain, stained with a brother's blood!" and the brown woman stood suddenly before him, with her arms waving aloft, her hair streaming, and her eyes flashing, like a Pythoness in her frenzy of divination. "Away to the desert, — herd with the lion, that preys on human kind, and with the tiger, that thirsts for gore; for they are your fit mates. Away with the vampire, away into utter darkness, — hide yourself at the ends of the earth, — begone to the savage and the cannibal, where slaying in cool blood is a merit, and may make you the chief of a horde. The beam is hewn, and the hemp is spun, that shall strangle you, and the iron is welded that is to hang you in chains."

"This is horrible," said the Creole, with a look of appeal towards Raby. "The public voice speaks through her. Take the warning, and fly."

"Oh, I must — I must," wildly exclaimed their wretched auditor; "but where — whither?"

"To London," answered the Creole. "Go to Woodley, of Maudlin's; he lives in St. James's Street. You shall hear from me there, — and then the first ship for Africa or America will be the best."

"Oh! my poor father, — and Grace," murmured Raby. "What! away for ever — to another world, — without a word, a farewell; I cannot, St. Kitts, I cannot."

"Stay, then, and bid them farewell from the gallows," resumed the woman. "Stay another hour, and death and infamy will be laid like blood-hounds upon your track; stay, and see the gray hairs of your father grovelling in the dust, and the brown locks of Grace Rivers plucked out by handfuls, as if that would save her from madness. Aye, *there* is the sting of the scorpion; but did I not tell you, that you should curse the day, and the hour of the day, that linked her fate with your own?"

"And the evil hour when I was born," added the fratricide. "Oh, that hand — that cruel right hand," and he held the criminal member as far from him as he could, "it has lost me for ever. Why, oh why, St. Kitts, was it directed against my brother?"

"You saw as much as I did," answered the Creole; "but this is no time to combat vague suspicions. You will have enough to do to ward off those which may be aimed at yourself. Hark! away for the love of God; that last shot was close at hand."

"Away," echoed the brown woman; "away, and pull foot at once; fly from death and vengeance! They are coming, they are coming. Strike out for life, for you are swimming beside the shark!" and she dramatised the passion of fear so vividly by voice, feature, and gesture, that under a sudden impulse of terror the tortured, bewildered Raby darted off towards the hedge, plunged through the furze, rushed across the ditch, and with the headlong flight of desperation ran at random, struggling and crashing, through the underwood of the forest.

As soon as he was out of sight Marguerite turned round to the Creole, and addressed him in a low feeble voice, marvellously altered from the exalted tone she had so lately assumed. But she obtained no answer. St. Kitts stood abstractedly, with his eyes fixed on the spot where his unfortunate cousin had disappeared, and his lips quivered, and his whole frame was agitated by a visible tremor. The woman observed these symptoms of discomposure, which she attributed, perhaps truly, to compunctious visitings, and her voice became stronger and sharper under the obvious excitement of irritation.

"I said, Walter, that I have been ill."

St. Kitts slowly turned, without answering, and gazed on her figure, which was incredibly emaciated since their last interview. Her bare arms were literally like mere bones covered with parchment, and the long discoloured hands, with their meager fingers and obtrusive joints, were as those of a skeleton. Her face, especially, was miserably altered; the nose was sharp, glossy, and pointed; the lips pale, and thin, and shrunken, so as to expose the teeth; the cheeks hollow, and the cheek-bones were unnaturally prominent. It would have been the aspect of a corpse, but for two restless black eyes, which from their deep sunken sockets still sparkled with their usual unquiet radiance.

"You are sadly changed, Marguerite," he said. "Your illness must have been severe, indeed."

"As severe," answered the woman, "as nature could well bear. Death has been wooing me, and nearly won me, too, or you would have met me ere this. Do you think, Walter, I could otherwise have remained idle with such doings at the Hall? They have prepared a rare show for a birth-day, like the Jamaica revel at a New Year; but where is the chief puppet?" she added, with a sort of chuckle, "where is their John Canoe?"

"He lies low enough," answered the Creole, thoughtfully; "a spectacle to damp all thoughts of mirth for long years to come."

"Aye, truly," said the woman, "and could I but have crawled like a

toad, I would have brought my own share of venom to poison their mirth; but I was crippled hand and foot. The very thought of my helplessness maddened me. I believe I was delirious, and raved; but do not start, Hennessey's Hut is secure from eaves-droppers. Had I died there, it would be unknown to any living soul whether my last breath was spent in cursing or blessing, in blasphemies or in prayers."

"It is dreadful to think of," exclaimed the Creole, his mind, Janus-like, looking at once towards the past and the future, and anticipating the afflicting scene that would ensue from the introduction of the dead to the living.

"It *was* dreadful," said the woman, mistaking the source of his emotion, "as dreadful as disease, destitution, and darkness, could make it, with death in the background. Alone and helpless, racked with pain, scorched with fever, and parched with thirst, delirious, and tortured by hellish dreams, I called, Walter Tyrrel, on you; to you I prayed, and through you, and for you only, I feel that I recovered and am now in life. The thought of Walter Tyrrel flitted like a firefly across the gloom of death. But for him, I should sink under the flood of my afflictions, or lift my head above the waters, like the alligator, only to sigh."

"And I must be a crocodile myself," said the Creole, giving her last simile a new direction, "and pretend to shed tears over the very victim I coveted."

"Aye," said the woman, "and echo the song of sorrow like a mocking-bird. I could teach you the notes, but you need little help from me either of head or hand. Your blow, Walter, was well struck — safely and surely."

"If you mean my cousin's death," answered the Creole, "I had no more hand in it than the man that will measure him for his coffin."

"Or the John Crow in hanging a Maroon," retorted the woman, "but who nevertheless turns death to account, and makes a feast upon the carcass. His fall will aid your rise, and the spiriting away of Raby will leave you free to love, without that sensitive plant in the pasture. One more remove, and, Sir Walter Tyrrel, I wish you joy! The father that outlives this must be made of the nether millstone; but if he be, a charmed egg may be laid at his door. And now go and bury your dead, and call the rabble tenantry to a gloomier feast than they expected. If they have a dance now, it must be in cloaks and scarfs. It will look as black," she said, smiling malignantly, "as a Dignity Ball!"

So saying, she indulged in her usual embrace, and then, with less than her accustomed agility, she made off through the gap in the hedge which Raby had left in his flight. Her words had made a deep impression on the Creole. Whether he had discerned Ringwood amongst the fern, and immediately concerted his destruction, must remain a secret impenetrable to all, save the Omniscient Searcher of the human heart; but his subsequent address and counsel to Raby seemed too certainly to prove, as his stepmother inferred, that he had studied to turn the tragedy to his own benefit. With all her knowledge of his implacable hatred against the deceased, — with all her participation in his guilty aspirings, — and in spite of her own sinister promptings, she acquitted him of everything but the secondary sin of rejoicing in the death of his enemy.

> "The very head and front of his offending,
> Had this extent — no more."

On the other hand, the progress of his own advancement in life and love had been adroitly urged; the very tone of levity even with which the calamity had been mentioned, contributed to deaden whatever natural feeling had been excited by the catastrophe, and with a considerable degree of composure St. Kitts proceeded in search of the gamekeeper, to give him directions

for the removal of the dead body. Guided by the report of the gun, he soon found old Mat, whom he led to the melancholy spot where the lifeless body of his young master lay stiffening in his gore.

"Oh! my God," exclaimed the aged forester, as he gazed at the horrid spectacle, "when will there be an end to accidents with guns? Look at his chest; he must have been leaning on the muzzle. Many a time and oft I warned him against the like."

"It was no accident," said the Creole.

"No accident!" exclaimed old Mat, with astonishment, "but sure enough here 's his own gun lying in the fern, loaded and primed."

"And yonder you 'll find another," said the Creole, pointing towards a clump of bushes, "with the pan open and the barrel empty."

The gamekeeper proceeded to the spot, and to his amazement picked up a weapon which his eye instantly recognised. "This is a different sort of gun," said he, as he carried it in his hand to the Creole, "to what I looked for. I thought mayhap to find an old musket with a barrel as rusty as anything, and a lock as would go off at half-cock, such a one as I took away from Black Will."

"No, it was no poacher work, Matthew," said the Creole, with a voice of real or affected distress, "it was a nearer and dearer hand that effected his death."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the gamekeeper, taking the Creole's hand with a look of deep commiseration, "is it possible, Mr. Walter, you have been so misfortunate? Why you will be wretched and heart-broke all the days of your life."

"No—his brother,—his brother!"—said the Creole hastily, whilst the old man absolutely gasped with surprise and horror at the communication.

"What, Master Raby!" he exclaimed at length, "him as hated a gun, and cried out agin shooting all as one as murder!—what the holy could take *him* a sporting?"

"You will know all in time," answered St. Kitts, with a solemnity and significance that at once excited the alarm and curiosity of the forester. "But now call your men."

Old Mat obeyed, and put his horn to his lips; and since the days of Robin Hood, so sorry a call, in more senses than one, was never wound; it was a harsh, unmusical blast, untruly pitched, and abruptly broken off by a sudden sigh, that bespoke the heavy heart of the blower. "I have never dropped a tear afore," he said, brushing one away from his eyes, "since my own poor boy died at sea. I 've kep 'em down for thirty year, but they 've come at last," and the gray-headed woodman wept till his broad chest heaved with sobs as he bent over the beloved remains of the once gay, generous, and gallant Ringwood.

"And where be that wretched boy, Raby?" he inquired, when, after an interval, he had mastered the first burst of grief,—"where have he hid his miserable head?"

"He is far enough off by this time, I hope," replied the Creole, "to elude all pursuit."

The word pursuit struck on the ear of the old retainer like a knell that sounded for the whole family of Tyrrel. "Foul play!" he ejaculated in an under tone, "then God help Sir Mark! the load was heavy enough afore, but this double charge will blow him to nothing." The under keepers now came up, and with faces and exclamations of wonder, horror, and grief, looked from the corpse at each other; but the prudent senior repressed their questions, and directing them to cut down a few branches, a sort of rude litter was formed, on which they carried the body towards the Hall, whilst the Creole, accompanied by Mat, hastened before to prepare its inmates for the reception of the mournful procession.

"Old Mat is deuced close upon it," remarked Tom, a sharp, shrewd fellow, to his mates, at a momentary halt they made with the bier; "but to my mind this bloody business has something ugly at the bottom on it. If them there was n't shot-holes, I 'd clap my finger on my nose, and say barkers. Well, nobody knows, — the truth 's snug enough at this present, but it may come out some day, as the man said when his ferret was laid up in a rabbit-burrow."

"And for my part," answered Sam, a fellow of obtuser capacity than the former, and withal somewhat superstitious, "I think you 're holding straight at it, that 's sartin. Look up west about, lad, at the sun settin, — he 's like a clot of blood, be 'ant un? and the light 's more like hell-fire, as the ranter talks on, than what 's natural; there 's been summut done to make God Almighty angersome, — mark my words on it."

The western sky, in accordance with the last speaker's description, had really assumed an awful and ominous appearance. The glowing sun, as if a visible type of the All-seeing Eye, "red with uncommon wrath," slowly withdrew behind a stupendous range of dense, pitch black, mountainous clouds, from whose rugged crests ascended jets of blood-red flame, and causing a lurid glow up to the very zenith, whilst enormous breaks and fissures in the dark volcanic mass served to disclose the intense ardent fires that glowed within, suggesting a comparison with those nameless flames to which the rustic had alluded. Fantastic clouds of a lighter texture, and portentous colours, in the mean time ascended rapidly from the horizon, and congregated overhead in threatening masses. Peals of distant thunder muttered from all quarters at once, as unintermitting almost as the roar of the ocean. The wind rushing in fitful gusts through the forest, filled the air with unearthly moans, and sighs, and whisperings; and the dead leaves rose and whirled in rings, as if following the skirts of the weird beings who are said to dance at the approach of tempest and human desolation. Now and then a solitary drop, inordinately large, fell heavily on the path, like those few enormous tears which Nature, according to Milton,

"Wept at completion of the mortal sin."

Quelled by the foreboding spirit of the time, the stoutest heart suffered a depression, — the bold, the reckless, and the boisterous, walked in serious silence, while the wild animals forgot their fear of man in a more absorbing terror. The hare lingered on the path, — the deer scarcely stirred, — and the bird sat steadfast on the bough, with one anxious eye turned upward at the troubled heavens.

As quickly as their mournful burden would permit, the men hurried on their course, but even at midway the forked lightning began to play around, followed at still shortening intervals by deafening crashes, that were multiplied by the surrounding echoes, till rival giants seemed defying each other from hill to hill. Fierce squalls of wind tore the leaves from the boughs, and occasional flaws of sleet and blinding hail flew along, and sometimes returned with a veering blast. A dismal gloom, not gradual, but sudden, came on, — a strange sombre opaque shadow, like that of a total eclipse of the sun, which, in conjunction with the dazzling of the lightning, completely bewildered the eye, and more than once the bearers stumbled as they groped their dreary way, associated with a corpse, as it were through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

The two heralds in advance, in the mean time, sped onward to the Hall, and just as they gained the shelter of its devoted roof, the storm burst in all its fury, the heavens opened and discharged sheets of blue and red flame, with explosions that shook the house to its foundation. The wind roared and raged with terrific violence, — doors slammed, — casements burst

open, and the fierce hail dashed in the glass of those that remained fastened, — the curtains streamed wildly, and the carpets rose in billows. Such was the aspect of the drawing-room when the Creole entered it, followed by the game-keeper; and amidst this tumult of appalling noises, a few low words, infinitely more terrible and stunning than the whole uproar of sound without, informed the heart-stricken Sir Mark that he was worse than childless, and raised a tempest of conflicting human passions that rivalled the war of the elements in violence, and was doomed long — long to outlast it in duration.

At such a climax in Tragedy, the Dramatist considerately drops his curtain: and with a similar feeling the Author will proceed no further with his description; but leaves the domestic desolation for the Reader to picture, as forcibly and circumstantially as his imagination may suggest, or his sensibility allow.

CHAPTER XXXII.

My Father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees.
Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy;
When, as I prattling twined around your neck,
You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
And, melting, said you saw my mother there,
Oh! save me from that worst severity
Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree! I cannot — 't is impossible.
So soon withdraw it, — give it to another.

TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

Man proposes, but God disposes.

OLD PROVERB.

"IN the midst of life," says the Psalmist, "we are in death," — a sentence the designer of Quarles's Emblems has illustrated by representing a little figure of a man enclosed within the ribs of a gigantic skeleton, like a bird in a cage. Little indeed did Justice Rivers think, on the very morning of the day which ended so fearfully, that the bars of that awful prison-house were closing around his adopted son-in-law, whom he lately beheld in the prime of youth, health, and vigour: on the contrary, the Magistrate, in the pride and joy of his heart, selected that very evening as the fittest opportunity to inform his daughter of the very eligible election he had made on her behalf. Accordingly, as soon as the cloth was removed after dinner, he introduced the topic of marriage with a pompousness of diction and authoritative manner, such as Dr. Johnson might have used had George the Third thought proper to make him one of his justices of the peace. As we have now happily progressed beyond the formal observances of those times when sons knelt for blessings, and daughters curtseyed dutifully to ordained lovers, the oration need not be preserved at full length for the benefit of the rising generation. He proved very satisfactorily, he thought, that no happy or well-constituted marriage could ever take place without the intervention of parents, and with many needless professions he declared he was ready and determined, as a devoted father, to do his own duty to the uttermost, in providing a partner for his daughter who should be every way unexceptionable to himself. This part of the subject led naturally to a flaming eulogium on Ringwood, which somehow or other glided off into a panegyric on the Tylney estates, and an enumeration of the advantages

that would result from their connexion with those of Hawksley. To all this tedious harangue, poor Grace listened with the distressed, reluctant, revolting face of an indigent patient, who has not only received a long nauseous prescription, but is obliged to wait personally at the apothecary's, and witness the process of its making up. Luckily, the orator was too much absorbed in his own eloquence to notice these symptoms; but at last came a summing up and a conclusion: and an awkward silence ensued as he looked vainly for something equivalent to the approving hum which in Cromwell's time used to greet the termination of an unctuous and well-relished sermon. His auditor looked disturbed, vexed, and perplexed; and in a much plainer style of language than he had lately used, he asked her abruptly what possible reason, or shadow of a reason, she had to urge against the match he proposed.

"Did she object to Ringwood's person?"

"No."

"Or his morals?"

"No."

"Did she dislike Sir Mark?"

"Quite the contrary."

"Didn't she admire the Hall?"

"Yes."

"And the grounds?"

"Extremely."

"Were not the estates contiguous?"

"Most assuredly, but——"

And Grace was preparing to show cause against the rule, when she was stopped by a fresh series of questions, none of which seemed to the Justice to require an answer, and therefore he allowed no time for reply. For instance, had she no sense of the obligations of duty, affection, gratitude, society, and common sense?—did she presume on his own too great tenderness, or the absence of a mother's authority, or that she could judge of her own interest better than a father?—was she really inclined to be disinherited, or only affecting a little maidenly modesty?—or had she been novel-reading?—with many other such queries; so that before they came to an end, Grace had divided and subdivided the paring of an apple into the smallest possible shreds. With a faltering voice she stammered out a profession of filial love and duty, qualified, however, with a reservation in favour of affections not under our own control,—which availed her but little. The stern magistrate had no more notion of such uncontrollable affections, than of uncontrollable vagrants, whilst there was a special statute which subjected all such wanderers to be apprehended, whipped, and passed to their own parishes. He therefore roundly informed his daughter that she must thenceforth consider her heart engaged, as well as her hand, for the match was fixed; and therefore she might suppose whatever discourse he had indulged her with, as having only been engaged in to promote conversation.

It now became necessary to speak out; and with the throbs and flutter of a new-caught bird, Grace proceeded to plead with her parent for her natural liberty. She solemnly pledged herself never to marry without his consent; but in return, expected not to be forced into wedlock against her own inclination; and finally looking closely down into her wine-glass, as if detecting some almost imperceptible flaw in it, she informed him she had already received a declaration, from a member of the family he wished her to enter into, and then, with some difficulty, and a blush that came and went several times during the process, she managed to pronounce the name of Raby Tyrrel.

"If that be all," exclaimed the Magistrate, with one of his grim smiles,

"we shall have no difficulty. I can guess your scruples; but I will help your inexperience to draw up a proper form of dismissal, or, how say you, Grace? Shall Nick Ferrers furnish you with a printed form of discharge, to fill up?"

"Oh! it is no jest!" murmured poor Grace; and, indeed, the mere word dismissal had drowned her blue eyes in tears. "I am afraid, — my dear father do forgive me; but —" and hastily running to him, and clasping her arms round his neck, she sobbed a few syllables into his ear. Whatever they were, a magical formula could not have had a more potent effect. He thrust his daughter from him, and backing his chair a couple of yards, sat gazing on her with a severe set look, worthy of the stern stoic he had chosen for his model. It made Grace shrink, and clasp her little hands so firmly to her eyes, that rings and spangles of pink and green, and gold colour, began dancing before them.

"Grace!" said that deep voice, which was never assumed but the words conveyed some infliction, "Ring for pen, ink, and paper. This childish fancy, and its object, must be discarded before I sleep."

"My dear — my dearest father!" cried the terrified girl, advancing and throwing herself on her knees at the feet of her obdurate parent. "Bid me — command me, do any thing but that —"

"NOTHING but that!" answered the voice, with a positive emphasis on the negative, that was meant to put an end to the debate: "and let it be done before bed-time, if you value my nightly blessing."

"Then God help me!" exclaimed Grace, rising up and lifting her hands and her flashing eyes towards the ceiling; "for I must appeal from one father to another! Heaven heard my vow, and I dare not — I do not wish to break it; and I will not!" So saying, with flushed cheeks and forced composure, she went and seated herself on the sofa, with that air of dignity which results from a sense of unmerited harshness and injustice.

The Justice was thunderstruck. He knew not what "woman, when she loves, can dare;" and this avowed rebellion against his authority aimed a blow at his whole code of laws — civil, moral, and divine. But his temper was not hot: it was cold, and, like metal when cold, inflexible; accordingly he met his daughter's declaration with great calmness; nevertheless, he abated not one jot of his determination that the sentence he had pronounced should be enforced. Tea passed over silently and serenely; but it was the calm preceding a storm. As soon as the meal was finished he left the drawing room, and in about a quarter of an hour he required the presence of his daughter in the study.

This room was Grace's aversion. She never willingly set foot in it; for it contained the gloomy picture of the Judgment of Brutus, to which, with the natural partiality of a child, she was fain to attribute the extreme severity of her parent. It was, in itself, a painting sufficiently repulsive: the figures were of the size of life, and the artist had contrived to throw into the Roman's countenance an expression of rigid austerity, so unmitigated by any softer conflicting feeling, that the spectator could not help thinking that such a personage was fully as likely to excite rebellion and conspiracy, as to punish it. Moreover, in presence of this obnoxious picture, such numerous awards of fine, imprisonment, hard labour, and stripes, had been made, that to Grace's fancy, the chamber seemed always occupied by an atmosphere of sighs.

It is always acutely painful to a well-disposed heart to find itself directly arrayed against the will of a parent; and as the daughter seated herself opposite her father, as it were taking up hostile positions preparatory to the attack and defence of adverse feelings, motives, and wishes, a pang smote her that her experience had never matched in bitterness. Some-

thing like a groan escaped her as she settled herself in her chair, and summoned all her heart, soul, and strength to aid her in resistance, for the first strange time, to the author of her being. The two minutes that elapsed before he spoke seemed a weary age. But at last came the toll of that curfew voice to command the extinction of the flame she cherished.

"Grace, from your cradle till this hour you have never disobeyed me. A long course of duty must not now be effaced by an act of deliberate opposition. The authority I derive from nature must be sustained. The blood that beats in your heart was derived from me, and the clothing of your hand is flesh of my flesh, and can it be said then that I have no right to dispose of one or control the affections of the other? No! by the death of your lamented mother I have rather a twofold claim to direct you, and it is doubly incumbent upon me to exercise the power so delegated, and to enforce, if necessary, your complete submission. If the sovereignty of a king be a divine right, and I see no reason to impugn the doctrine, how sacred must be the origin of a parent's jurisdiction, where the subject is indebted to the supreme head, not merely for liberty and protection, but for life itself, and the means whereby life is sustained. Domestic government indeed is, or ought necessarily to be, a pure despotism, seeing that there is no intermediate estate between the parent and the child, the ruler and the ruled. His decrees, consequently, are arbitrary and absolute, exacting and requiring implicit acquiescence. Unlike the monarchical sway, it can in no case be conferred by election or popular suffrage, nor can it, without criminality, be abdicated and laid down. Ill, therefore, would it become me to concede my own will in any point, and especially a point of magnitude, thereby annulling, undermining, and vitiating that paramount principle, which, for the sake of domestic polity, I am imperiously bound to uphold. The ancient title of Dictator, attached to the first magistrate, who was considered as Pater Familias, expresses my own view of the case, and at this moment I have before me a memorable example of the inexorable rigour with which the Romans conceived it necessary to maintain such authority."

The last allusion was fatal to the courage and composure of poor Grace. She had never known her father to revoke a decision which he had backed by the example of Brutus; and the reference to the picture assured her at once that no terms of compromise would be listened to, but that she must either submit by an unconditional surrender, or prepare to maintain the independence of her heart, like the memorable defence of Zaragoza, by a protracted struggle of unexampled misery and pertinacity. She could not forbear a shudder as she looked at the set determined countenance of her father; and, in addition to her mental distress, she began to suffer under that physical depression and discomfort which peculiarly affect some individuals at the approach of a storm. As the Justice resumed his oration, every pause of his sonorous voice was filled up with the muttering of distant thunder, a deepening gloom fell suddenly in the apartment, and as Grace cast a glance through the window which looked towards the Hall, she saw the landscape darkening under the black lowering clouds, and the crooked lightning darting angrily along the horizon. Even thus her own prospect in life was suddenly overcast and menaced with trouble and tempest, and she could willingly have answered the moans and sighs of the wind with her own.

"And now, Grace," said the Magistrate, "having pointed out to you the line prescribed by duty, I hope a child of mine cannot require an appeal to her affection to induce her to the course of rectitude. I need not, I hope, remind her that the path pointed out to her by parental solicitude for her welfare, leads eminently to her own happiness and advantage. It will be

sufficient to Grace Rivers that filial piety enjoins a cheerful and ready obedience to the will and wishes of the best of fathers."

Grace hid her face in her hands, and made no answer.

"Speak, I command you," said the Justice, in his sternest tone: "Give me your promise forthwith to receive Ringwood as your accepted lover, and in consideration of your prompt acquiescence I may be induced to forgive your breach of duty and due confidence in making a selection of your own without my sanction, privity, or concurrence."

"I acknowledge my fault," said Grace, sobbing, "but, indeed, I waited only for courage and opportunity to tell you all —"

"Enough," said the Magistrate, in a softened tone, not conceiving it possible that a rebellious thought could have survived his oration. "The past, Grace, is pardoned; and now prepare to meet your future husband on Wednesday, for in the interval I mean to visit Sir Mark and settle preliminaries; and I feel assured that the formation of such a desirable match will add largely and universally to the general joy at the festival which is about to take place."

A startling crash of thunder, as if dashing in the roof of the house, seemed to ratify the sentence just pronounced. The father sat still as unmoved and imperturbable as usual, though the flash which belonged to the shock had shivered a poplar in sight of the window; but it made the terrified girl start to her feet with a smothered scream, as she saw the green tree upon which she had been gazing instantaneously stripped and whitened by the rending off of the bark.

"Let the disobedient dread the bolt," said the Justice, solemnly; "but you, Grace, have chosen the better part. There has been angry weather between ourselves, but it has only served to clear the moral atmosphere. Duty resumes its sway; affection shines out unobscured; and all is peace, harmony, and domestic serenity."

"Oh, no, no, no!" exclaimed Grace, in a piercing voice, "I do not, — I cannot —"

"You can, you must, and you shall," replied the Justice, resuming all his austerity of voice, and knitting his brows more rigidly than ever. "You know my will. Obey it, or henceforth be no daughter of mine."

"Then heaven pity me, for I am fatherless," said Grace, mournfully, and clasping her hands. "If you, sir, can recall affections that have once been given, it is a power beyond mine. Discard me as you may, my heart will never cease to love you; it will always turn to you with fond remembrance; and if with the same constancy, the same tenacity, it clings to its attachment elsewhere —"

"Not another syllable, I charge you," said the Justice, "unless you would provoke my curse. Know that to this desirable contract Sir Mark Tyrrel and myself have been pledged, and mutually bound in honour, for years past. Should it be now broken, it shall not be said on the other part that it was through want of due firmness and decision on mine."

Grace, however, inherited some portion of her father's inflexibility; and besides, her affections were now deeply engaged to Raby, and inspired her with that devoted spirit of enduring constancy that belongs to a woman's love. Religion never made more martyrs or more heroical amongst men, than the tender passion has produced of the gentler sex. A gleam of triumph shone through Grace's tears, as she determined in her soul, at all hazards, and through every suffering, to remain true to her plighted faith, with the self-devotion so sweetly recorded of lovers in ancient song. Her features took an expression of resolve, and her limbs composed themselves in a less forlorn attitude, as, with a faltering voice, but unfaltering purpose, she breathed a vow never to bestow her hand unless her heart went with it.

"And take my solemn vow in exchange," said the obdurate parent, ris-

ing from his chair, and confronting his daughter, while he pronounced each word with deliberate emphasis — "Except as the wife elect of Ringwood Tyrrel, you shall have no more a home in my heart or in my house, so help me Heaven!"

A long and dreadful silence ensued, whilst the father and daughter, each as pale as marble, stood thus face to face, and looked at each other, mutually astounded by the unnatural position to which they stood thus solemnly pledged. The lightning flashed fearfully around; the thunder rolled incessantly; the hail dashed furiously; and the wind had become a hurricane; but the terrors of the storm were lost upon the pair thus absorbed, each suffering the pangs of a bereavement little short of death. At last the father turned abruptly away, and began to pace up and down the apartment; while Grace threw herself into a chair, and, laying her head upon the table, gave free passage to her tears. In the mean time, in walking to and fro, the Justice, occasionally glancing through the window, perceived a horseman galloping at full speed through the storm towards the house, but it was so dusky that he was unable to distinguish the livery of the Tyrrels till the groom dismounted at the gate. In some alarm at the apparent urgency of the mission at such a time, he hurried from the room to anticipate the tidings, leaving Grace so lost in grief as to be unconscious of his departure.

About ten minutes had elasped, and she was still weeping, when a touch upon her shoulder made her start up, and she beheld her father looking at her with an indescribable expression on his face, which she found it impossible to interpret.

"Grace," he said, after a long pause, and his voice had an unusual quiver in it, and the hand shook violently that still remained on her shoulder, "Grace, I have dreadful tidings to communicate — this match is at an end with Ringwood Tyrrel."

"Oh! my dear father, thanks, thanks," sobbed Grace, sinking at his feet, and clasping his hand, which she attempted to kiss, but he drew it away, and retreated a step backwards.

"It was the act of Heaven, and not mine," he said, with an awe-struck look, and a tone of deep humiliation; "God's will be done! I intended Ringwood for my son-in-law; but I stand rebuked. He is gone 'where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.'"

"Ringwood dead!" exclaimed Grace; "it is impossible!" and she fixed her gaze upon vacancy; for at such announcements the mind cannot immediately reconcile itself to the conversion of a familiar living image into an effigy of death.

"It is too true," said the Justice, shaking his head, while tears dropped from his black eyelashes; "and God comfort my poor old friend. To lose his first-born son was a heavy calamity enough, without blood and unnatural violence."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Grace, almost gasping with horror and amazement, and shuddering as she pronounced the name of St. Kitts.

"Worse — worse tenfold," said her father; "a wretch who must be called a brother!"

He proceeded no further, for at the last word Grace uttered a piercing shriek, and fell, as if shot, upon the floor. Her cry alarmed all the household, and the servants rushed into the room before the distracted parent had presence of mind enough to call for their assistance. With the utmost difficulty the poor girl was restored to life, if it could be called living — for at each temporary recall, after uttering a few disjointed syllables, she relapsed again into insensibility. In this pitiable condition she was conveyed into her chamber, and placed in bed, where night found her in a raging fever and delirious.

A favourite with the household, she was affectionately attended and nursed by the old housekeeper and another female domestic who had been attached to her from her infancy, and many a sincere tear was shed, and many a fervent prayer put up, for the sorrows and the recovery of the dear, good, and beautiful Grace Rivers.

The stern harsh nature of the Justice relented at the spectacle of his only and beloved child thus stretched upon a bed, possibly of death; and he gave way to his feelings with a violence equally unexampled and unexpected from such a source. In reality he doted upon his daughter, and nothing but his extravagant notions of parental right, with a firm conviction that he was securing her welfare, could have sustained him in the severe course he had recently pursued towards her. But his plan was now wrecked; he had no motive for harshness; and his words and manner indicated nothing but the intense anxiety and affliction of a fond father. He passed the whole night in his study receiving frequent reports of her state, or paying visits to her bedside; but alas, only to be shocked by her incoherent ravings, which drove him down stairs again, to watch and pray in agony for the arrival of the physicians, who had been sent for by express.

It is worthy of serious reflection, as illustrating the uncertainty of human plans and the vanity of human wishes, that, at the very time when the Justice was so absolutely broaching his matrimonial scheme to his daughter, and even whilst he was asserting the infallibility of his own will, and presumptuously shaping the course of events — at that very hour was the bridegroom of his election struck dead; thus signally vindicating the supremacy of the Divine Will, in accordance with the adage which serves for a motto to the present chapter. Reflections akin to this forced themselves on the mind of the magistrate during his solitary watch, and with a chastened spirit he acknowledged the rebuke; but as too often happens, where the author of the infliction may not be murmured at, or arraigned, the reproach fell upon the instrument. The past conduct and character of the unfortunate Raby were reviewed with the merciless malignity ascribed to a Venetian inquisitor; his acts were remorselessly scrutinised, and his motives wrested by uncharitable construction into infernal impulses. He was accused of aggravated fratricide, condemned unheard, branded, and put under ban, — the implacable demands of rigid justice resumed their sway with a more vindictive craving than had hitherto belonged to them, and in a very unchristian spirit the magistrate determined to exert himself on the track of the murderer, and, employing all his means and sagacity, to pursue him with the unrelenting purpose of the bloodhound.

In this resolve, the feelings of his daughter found no allowance. Love in his estimation was but as one of those slight epidemics, easily caught, and as easily cured by proper treatment; and indeed frequently got over without any treatment at all. As for the repugnance of Sir Mark to a criminal prosecution, an admirer of Brutus, with a monomania on the subject of justice, could not reasonably be expected to spare a son who was not his own.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a green-grass turf,
At his heels a stone.

HAMLET.

Weeping maiden, sorrow laden,
Why in brine such glances smother?
If your lover can 't recover,
Will red eyes entice another?

FURNIVAL.

DEATH falls like a bomb-shell. Wherever it may strike, the explosion scatters destructive fragments on every side, inflicting wounds and anguish of various magnitude and degree. Thus, whilst desolation came upon the Hall and Hawksley, a portion of the same cruel affliction was carried to Squire Ned, by Dick the huntsman; and Bob, the whip, galloped over to Hollington with similar intelligence.

Like tidings to King Henry came
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland,
Was slain in Chevy Chase.

And the difference of manner with which the tidings were received by the two kings in the old ballad, was paralleled in the two last instances. The Squire listened to the heavy news of Ringwood's fall, with the desponding reflection of the Scottish monarch, that death could not have stricken another of such account as he. "Shot like vermin!" he ejaculated, after a pause of stupor; and rushing off to the stable, he began saddling a horse with his own hands. In a few minutes he was mounted, and in another he was dashing along amidst thunder, lightning, and rain, with the desperate gallop of a Spectre Horseman, ever and anon repeating his first ejaculation, throughout his dreary ride, and, at each exclamation, burying the spur up to the rowels in the flanks of his steed.

The shock to the citizen's feelings, on the contrary, took a selfish turn, and gave his alarm a singular, but characteristic, direction. With as much curiosity as concern, while the whipper-in stood dripping and shivering before him, Twigg required as circumstantial a narrative of the catastrophe as the man could give; the auditor occasionally turning up his eyes, flapping with his hands, and making a clucking sound with his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and when the melancholy tale was ended, he proceeded to give vent to his emotions.

"Very shocking, very shocking indeed! I'll pack 'em all off, stock and lock, there shan't be so much as a pocket-pistol about the Hive, as sure as my name is Twigg."

There is an old saying that extremes meet, and no adage can be more strikingly verified than this is in human life, by the frequent encounter of the serious and the ludicrous on the same occasion. There cannot be a more erroneous notion than that popular one, which appropriates to mirth and grief each its own peculiar stage, like the Parisian theatres, where one house is devoted to tragedy and another to comedy; whereas the world is a vast stage; whereon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are not only acting at once, but sometimes by the same performer. Of this truth one of the most remarkable characters in its drama must have been well aware, when he

pronounced his memorable sentence, that "from the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step." Even thus closely lie the domains of laughter and tears, divided, not by an impassable frontier, as some suppose, but dubiously separated by a debatable land, leaving easy access to either territory, and, of course, subjecting the rival kingdoms to frequent incursions. Thus tears are seen at festivals, and smiles at funerals; nay, laughter, in the writer's experience, has mingled with lamentation in the chamber of death. Nevertheless even Shakspeare, the best judge of man, next to his Maker, and the best acquainted with the human heart, has been moused at by some of his owlish critics, for his abrupt transitions from the pathetic to the humorous, as if such were not the very warp and woof of our variegated fabric. These alternations of lights and shadows are imperatively necessary to a faithful picture of life; but it is sometimes made a cause of reproach to the painter that he should be accessible at a tragical occurrence to any livelier associations, as if the same tearful eye that appreciates the sorrows of the inmates of a house of mourning, should see nothing but melancholy in the smirks of the two smug mutes at the door. But death himself sometimes cuts a caper in mockery, and the very skull of man wears a grin, commemorative of the farcical passages in the serio-comic entertainment that is over. There is a class in the present day called, par excellence, exclusives, but the Passions do not belong to this caste, they meet, mingle, and shake hands. They are not bigoted sectarians and separatists, but congregate and communicate freely in one great temple — the human heart; so that life becomes from the mixture a sort of Irish wake, a medley of joy and sorrow, with some weeping, and some laughing, desolation and jollification, howling and singing, praying and drinking, loving and fighting, with the grave in the back ground. Even the same passion will sometimes transform itself so utterly, as to raise doubts of its identity; thus Grief, in passing merely from house to house, will change in manners and costume as much as if she had travelled from London to Paris, and thence to Petersburg and Amsterdam. In one place, for example — pale, with dishevelled hair and neglected dress, she will sit as still as a statue, a very Niobe, in all but the trickling motion of her tears. In another, clad in fashionable sables, she will weep becomingly into white cambric, as gracefully affected as at her first perusal of Charlotte and Werter. In a third, cased in "abominable blacks," instead of spring silks, she mopes less like sorrow, than a fit of the sulks. Elsewhere you may find her violent, hysterical, and noisy, raining like St. Swithin, sobbing, snuffing up salts, and, at measured intervals, bursting into a loud exclamation, as if instead of crying for a husband, she was crying mackarel. Finally you may meet her at Brighton for a change of scene, fat, fair, and forty, telling you, with the comely, cosy composure of a quakeress, that her heart is broken, she is tired of life, and her address is 10, Brunswick Terrace.

The judicious reader, therefore, will not be surprised to find the grief at Hawksley and the grief at Hollington not so exactly alike as two twin sisters, whose dresses, moreover, have been out of the same piece, and made up in the same fashion.

As soon as Twigg had dismissed the whipper-in, — and his agitation did not make him forget doing what is genteel, for he considerately dipped his hand into his pocket, and gave Bob a half-crown, as if he had brought him a hare — he fell into soliloquy. Since the memorable fete at the Hive, the Twigg family had never attempted another; and for some time past, their speculations had been very busy with the festival at the Hall, and particularly whether it would turn out any better than their own. The downfall of the domestic jubilee consequently occupied a prominent place in the citizen's meditations.

"Good lord! good lord!" he said, "here's a domestic family blow!

It's come down what I call thick and threefold. Poor, dear, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, how I feel for him; such a dreadful misfortune for a man of his property! Eldest son and heir — tents, tables, illuminations, twenty-one guns, and every thing — shocking — shocking — shocking — and only just coming of age. We may well say what is life — all feasting to-day, and all fasting to-morrow — all dancing and jigging, and singing and bands playing, and flag flying, and bells ringing, and huzzaing one minute, and the next moment quite another sort of thing — yes, yes, I can enter into a father's feelings. Well, I never did like fire-arms, but my mind 's made up. It might be my own case before I could say Jack Robinson — and such a fine well-grown young man too — to be born to such property, and never can come into it. Poor 'Tilda! she'll go half crazy. Toasts — sentiments — speechifying, and a whole roasted bullock — cut off in his prime as you may say — and just when people were going to wish him many returns of the day — poor boy — but such is man — it's quite a warning — who knows — here I am — and to-morrow here I ain't — I'll certainly make a will, and dispose of my property — Oh dear, dear! Sir Mark must make sad alteration in his; one son dead, and the other absconded. Well, thank God, T. junior, has no brother to shoot him through and through like a mad dog. It's a very, very bad business — worse than a regular smash, says you, with shutters up, execution in the house, and everything."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, who had entered the room during the last sentence of his soliloquy, "what frightful fancies is running in your head?"

"I wish they were fancies, Ma'am," answered Twigg, with a voice unusually solemn; "but fancy can't shoot a young man through the body — and fancy can't put off all the to-do at the Hall — and fancy didn't come here on a tearing horse, through thunder and lightning — and fancy is n't Bob the whipper-in" — he continued, conceiving this discourse upon fancy equal to what is called breaking the news — "and it was n't fancy that told me, that Raby Tyrrel had taken up his gun like Cain, and shot his own brother."

"His own brother! — what, Ringwood!" shrieked out Mrs. Twigg, while her husband precipitately rushed for a chair for her to swoon in; but, contrary to his expectations, she showed no tendency to insensibility: probably, because she had already fainted so much at the flashes and claps of the storm that she was out of fits. After a minute of consideration, she turned hastily round and rushed out of the room, and a sound followed like the rumble of a parish engine descending the church steps, except that the noise went up the stairs instead of coming down — then came a loud scream from over head, with a bustle of feet, answered by the violent continuous ringing of a bell in the lower story, and a prolonged clatter of many persons rushing up from below. Following the direction of the human current, the father hurried upwards to his daughter's apartment, where he found her in strong fits, with the mother slapping one hand, and her milliner crooking the little finger of the other.

It is or was the custom of the modern Romans to parade their dead relations through the streets; and Dr. Trusler mentions seeing a portly defunct thus carried in state, in his holyday suit, with one hand holding a bouncing nosegay, and the other stuck gracefully in his side. As pale as death, and tricked out according to the last new fashion from Paris, which she had been trying on preparatory to the fete at the Hall, Miss Twigg might have been taken for a body undergoing its adornment for a similar ceremonial. A pink satin had, as if in studious contrast to her complexion, made her look "very dead indeed," while a silk dress, of a pattern not at that time old-fashioned, on a white ground, displayed large bunches of roses, lilies, and some nondescript blossoms, looking as if the hand of regret

had strewed her with flowers. But she soon literally kicked down this comparison, by her fit assuming that convulsive character vulgarly distinguished as kicking hysterics; and leaving the little finger, the milliner was fain to snatch off the becoming hat, and to prevent two remarkably active feet from entangling themselves in the surrounding flounces.

"Screech, my love, it will relieve you," said the anxious mother, raising her daughter as she spoke into a favourable position for the exertion of her voice; and accordingly Matilda gave a scream that convinced the whole household, if not the whole neighbourhood, that she was alive; at the same time striking out with both arms and legs as if really swimming in what Hamlet calls "a sea of troubles."

"Hold her arms," exclaimed the father, advancing for the purpose; "why the devil do n't you lay her on the bed?"

"The worst place in the world," cried the milliner, interposing in dread of the proposed rumbling of the new dress. "But gentlemen know nothing of these things," she added, with a significant look at Mrs. Twigg, which said "turn him out" as plainly as if it had come from the one-shilling gallery of a playhouse.

"Mr. T.," said the lady, taking the hint, "you do'nt know what insensibility is. Leave her to us, poor dear! and I 'll answer for her coming-to directly you are out of the room."

"As much as to say, ma'am," retorted Twigg, angrily, "that it's all 'sham Abraham,' and as such can recover as convenience dictates. But as I am a little solicitous, an early opportunity will oblige; not but what I think, at bringing-to a daughter, a father might help as well as a mother;" and by way of proving his assertion, as he stalked out of the apartment, he closed the door with a slam that might have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

No sooner was he gone than, as Mrs. Twigg had predicted, the patient actually unclosed her eyes, and her feelings regained a state of composure as suddenly and completely as when a whaler is dashed to pieces, and lulls the troubled surface of the waters with her whole cargo of oil.

And now, lest it be supposed that a pen — none of the hard short-nibbed sort, but one of the softest ever shaped — could make itself merry with disappointed affection or real distress, it must be unwillingly written to the discredit of the sex, that the young lady's grief was no greater than a fresh admirer could dissipate.

Since the fête champetre at the Hive, the son of a baronet had been losing ground to the son of a lord, and Miss Twigg had determined to set her cap, and the new pink hat to boot, at the honourable Mr. Danvers, some of whose looking on she had taken to herself. The ambition of the mother encouraged this second flirtation; but something was due to decorum on the interment of the first. Hence this dramatic burst of sorrow; after which, if the heart of Matilda sang any dirge at all over the departed Ringwood, it was to the tune of that most prudential of ditties,

'Tis well to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'T is water, here 't is water there,
'T is water, water, every where.

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

Rumour is a pipe
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures;
And of so easy and so plain a stop,
That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
The still discordant wavering multitude,
Can play upon it.

KING HENRY IV. PART II.

THROUGHOUT the day succeeding the storm, the rain poured as at the old deluge, and the sun rose the next morning on an unusual scene. Where his beams had before glittered but on dew-drops, they now glistened over a wide expanse of water; where formerly a winding sluggish mist betrayed the course of the latent brook, the light now danced on a broad brawling river; trees that used to cast long horizontal shadows across the meadows, now showed inverted reflections, tending downwards from their feet; what used to be hills were now become islands swarming with horses, cattle, deer, sheep, pigs, and even hares and rabbits, while the lapwing screamed piteously over a watery waste that had once been a heath. Such a flood had not occurred in the county within the memory of man. Rills had swelled to rivulets, brooks to rivers, and the rivers themselves were become roaring, raging torrents. Bridges were carried away, hay and corn stacks floated off, and uprooted trees were whirled along with the current. Even the "gentle streamlet," beside which Raby and Grace had plighted their troth, was now a rapid, in parts white with foam, and elsewhere as dark and troubled as the future course of the love it helped to commemorate. The little bridge had been swept away, and a venerable weeping willow, a sort of vegetable King Lear, showed plainly that its hoary head had been exposed to "the pelting of the pitiless storm," and half uprooted by the sapping of the banks, seemed meditating to cast itself into the turbid waters.

Considerable damage was suffered in the hamlet, — cellars were turned nto cold baths, and floors and kitchens were well washed without much advantage in point of cleanliness; whilst the villagers stepped from their houses, like the Venetians, into boats. Animals of various kinds had been drowned, and two or three unfortunates of human kind were reported to be missing.

Evil tidings are swift of passage. They seem to copy the flight of eagles, vultures, kites, and all those creatures equally swift and cruel, which bring sharp beaks and talons wherewith to tear and to torture the vitals. In an incredibly short space of time, in spite of interrupted communication, the destruction of bridges, and the stoppage of mails, the news of the violent death of Ringwood Tyrrel was spread throughout the county. It flew from house to house, and from mouth to mouth, and with the ravages of the storm and the flood, — the rending of oaks, — the blasting of cattle, and the firing of stacks, the fearful bolt that had fallen upon Tylney Hall became a topic of popular conversation.

Travellers by old repute, are liars, and a story in the course of its journeyings invariably becomes, at each succeeding stage, rather less addicted to the truth. — Thus, in the progress of the melancholy narrative from place to place, it acquired many considerable and circumstantial additions, which passed not the less currently that they were all forgeries. For instance,

Raby was reported not only to have murdered his brother, but to have attempted the life of his father by poison, the deadly ingredient even being particularized by name; howbeit, one version said laurel-water, another arsenic, and a third corrosive sublimate. In another quarter it was as confidently affirmed that Sir Mark had destroyed himself, though the accounts still differed whether by laudanum, a pistol, or a rope; while, in the eastern part of the county, he had as certainly gone raving mad, and been coerced into a strait waistcoat. In short, the most extravagant rumours prevailed, but the main facts being based, alas! upon immutable truth, were universally the same; and wherever the dreadful deed was discussed, speculation became busy with chances, and characters, and motives; and the ultimate decision, as the Creole had predicted, was unfavourable to his fugitive kinsman. The murder of Sir John Dinely, by a brother covetous of his estates, was frequently quoted, and the cutting off of Ringwood just at the point of his coming of age, was particularly insisted on to countenance the most dark and dreadful conjectures. Probably, such is the intense selfishness of some natures, the prevention of the promised festival had occasional weight in these decisions. Tears were shed that, perhaps, belonged more to disappointment than pity, as useless finery was consigned to its ancient receptacles; and a few coarse and brutal individuals were even heard openly to execrate the unfortunate fratricide for killing his brother on the wrong side of the feast. The vulgar appetite for the terrible and the marvellous, and a consequent tendency to heap horror on horrors, had had some share in these exaggerations and insinuations, a portion of which moreover were to be traced to the notorious suspicions of the under-keepers at the Hall, who had been confirmed in their surmises by the supernatural signs and omens which a superstitious fancy had supposed to accompany the removal of the corpse. The lightning was declared to have fluttered and hovered about the dead body in an extraordinary manner; and in supreme corroboration was the fact, (a curious coincidence, though quite a natural occurrence,) that the fatal weapon had been struck from the hand of the assistant who carried it, and was found the next morning with its bright barrels changed by the electric fluid into all the colours of the rainbow.

Amongst all these harsh inquisitors no one thought of, or sympathized with, the deplorable condition of the distracted fugitive, who had rushed, in a state of mind difficult to conceive, into the wild forest, to encounter the united assaults of anguish, despair, remorse, and terror, in the midst of darkness, storm, and desolation. Startled by the woman's wild exclamations, he had taken to flight, pursued by every infernal fiend that can haunt the mind of man, and with all his speed ran to and fro, he knew not whither, in the panting bewilderment of the hunted hare, as described by Shakspeare:

> Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
> Turn and return, indenting with the way:
> Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
> Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay.
> For misery is trodden on by many;
> And being low, never relieved by any.

Although but accidentally the agent of his brother's death, the acute pangs of self-reproach were not spared to him, as his conscience suggested that a deviation from his own creed, relative to spilling even the blood of brutes, had entailed on him so signal a judgment. Thus he considered himself, at least indirectly, a murderer, equally frowned upon by earth and heaven; and, under the influence of this harrowing reflection, by which his reason was almost unsettled, he felt, thought, and acted, according to the impulses of the mere assassin. Indeed, upon no other principle would it be possible to account for a course of proceeding so like that of conscious guilt.

The myrmidons of the law, moreover, according to the Justice's resolution, had been despatched in all directions in pursuit of the prejudged criminal, extending and confirming the popular prejudice wherever they went, so that if the unhappy fugitive ventured amongst men, he must have heard every voice raised against him in execration, coupled with hopes of his speedy apprehension,—many a wish for his execution, and even some hardy anticipations of his last dying speech and confession.

Such was the state of popular feeling, when a jury was summoned to pronounce on the manner in which Ringwood Tyrrel had come by his death, it may very easily be supposed, that the verdict the public opinion forestalled, was an unfavourable one; what chance there was to the contrary, may be inferred from part of a conversation that took place between two pedestrians, as they walked side by side along the road from Hollington towards the Hall. One of the parties will be recognized as a personage already introduced to the reader, the other was a gentlemanly, middle-aged person, of the military profession, to judge from his mustachios, black stock, and blue surtout of a soldierly cut: moreover his countenance appeared toil-worn and weather-beaten, and deeply embrowned by hard service in foreign climates.

"I wonder where he will be hung," said the former, "on the old gallows at Midgeley Common, or at the place where the deed was done on?"

"He is not caught yet," remarked the latter, "much less condemned even by a coroner's jury."

"No, but Gregory 's at his heels," answered the other, "with the posse commitus, as the saying is. He may cheat the marble, but he won't cheat the wood. As for the inquest, it will be wilful murder, and nothing else, take my word for it; that 's a slab, as I say when a thing is downright flat and fixed upon."

"I hope it may be," said the soldier, "for I hate killing in cold blood. But how are you so sure, friend?"

"Sure, say you!" exclaimed Master Tablet, for it was no other than that worthy master mason, "I should n't mind cutting it in, every letter on it. To one as looks such a gentleman I do n't mind blabbing a bit; but, sir, you must be as mum as a death's head."

"I am used to secrets," said the stranger, with a subdued smile.

"Why, then, sir," proceeded Tablet, "Master Gregory, our head constable, sir, do n't like trouble, and always saves as much on it as he can; so he just looks in at the Rabbits last night, and serves summonses on the whist club, nine on us at a haul, and as we could n't get up no rubber, a foreman was chose, and we went through the business preliminary. Every man was unanimous, sir, and that 's how I know the verdict aforehand."

"And a very proper decision," said the stranger; "indeed no other could be honestly formed. But the number, friend, at your rehearsal, was short of the legal complement."

"Oh never fear, sir," answered the mason; "I can turn Trott and Jenkins round my finger, and as for Bundy——"

"How! is *he* on it?" exclaimed the stranger, with a tone of surprise.

"To be sure he is," said Tablet, "as any one else might have been, by standing tip. He got Greggy to summon him on purpose, and I warrant you, if we give a certain person to Jack Ketch, he won't be long giving him to Satan, for he 's a deal more fond of sending folks to Hell than to Heaven."

"If there be one place or the other," said the stranger, as if speaking to himself. "And Sir Mark Tyrrel, friend, how does he bear this calamity?"

"As I could bear a ton of Scotch granite," said the mason; "has never held up since. David and Absalom, sir, David and Absalom. They say he do n't neither eat, drink, nor sleep, and walks up and down his room day and night. But it 's walking on his last legs; he 's a dead man, sir,

I 'm as sure on it as if I saw his name up between two flying nobodys, as the ignoramuses call my cherubims."

"And the estates?" asked the inquisitive stranger, "what will become of them?"

"They will go to the nevy, or rather the nevy will come to them," answered Tablet, with a smile at his own wit. "I was at the Rabbits the night he come from abroad, with his father that 's dead; poor gentleman, it was touch and go with him; no sooner on English ground, than under it. I resurgam'd him myself. Did you know him, sir?" continued the mason, observing some signs of agitation in his companion.

"Colonel Tyrrel was my old companion abroad," answered the other, instantly mastering his emotion, "and I should be glad to hear what character is borne by his son."

"More liked than loved," said the mason with a significant nod. "The devil's own temper, Hanway says, when he was a younker; and no wonder. Folks do say his mother gave the father his memento mori, and Mrs. Hanway saw the scar in his side when he was laid out."

"Aye, there is never a lie hatched, but some breast will be found to brood it," answered the stranger sharply; "and Mrs. Hanway seems one of those motherly hens."

"To be sure, folks will detract," said the mason. "I remember when I put up Bedlamite's obelisk — but we 'll let that rest in peace. It 's a comfort there *is* an heir to the Hall of the name of Tyrrel, to prevent every thing going out of the family, like *sic transit*.

"It *is* a comfort," said the stranger, "and I hope it will be appreciated."

"That 's what I think myself," said the mason, eagerly; "instead of it 's going to them Twiggs, though I say it as should n't say it, for they give me the order for the two stone bee-hives, instead of the old eagles. But there 's no real gentility about 'em; they boggle with a sculptor about a marble chimbley-piece, as if he was only a dealer in Flanders bricks. To my mind that ain't aristocracy. I 'm told Mr. Twigg never crossed a horse, and then what would become of our hunt? I've erected as good requiescats over horses as Christians; and if Mr. Walter did come a little of the wrong side of the blanket, as folks say, he 's likely to be on the right side of the sheet, when it comes to debtor and creditor."

"You do honour to your profession," said the stranger, suddenly halting and extending his hand to the mason, who gripped it as if he had been a freemason. "It is too commonly supposed, that your province is only to exalt the virtues of the dead, but I find I have met with a man of more liberal views, who also does justice to the character of the living. The son of Colonel Tyrrel could not be otherwise than generous. When a Twigg dies, a diminutive tablet will express economy, the greatest and the smallest of his attributes; but at the departure of Walter Tyrrel, you will have to sculpture the cardinal virtues as large as life, and every good quality for which you can find a symbol."

"That 's my own idea," said the sculptor; "if it ever pleased God to give me such an order. I 'd put Faith, Hope, and Charity at top, and the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock at the bottom; that 's what I call allegory. To my mind, allegory is putting one thing to stand for another that is n't it — like a member standing for a county. Talking of elections, the last contest killed Sir Theophilus Bowles: the crying Cupid I put on his monument, used always to be called my plumper."

"There is another election to-day, between guilt and innocence," said the stranger, "and I hope the cause of public justice will triumph. Should it be in peril, friend, I can help you to a secret, in return for your own, that will do no discredit to your sagacity. But remember we are upon honour.'

"As true as headstone or footstone," answered the mason, "and as I hope to be saved by I. H. S."

"If it be asked, then," said the stranger, "what motive beyond interest could induce one brother to make away with the other, answer, without hesitation, Miss Rivers — call her own father in proof of it."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the mason, lifting up his hands and eyes like one of his own stone effigies. "It was always whispered, that the young Squire and Miss Twigg had a leaning to each other, like two palm branches over an urn."

"That is very possible," rejoined the stranger, "but young heads and old heads form opposite plans. The Baronet and the Justice had made a match between the heir and the heiress, but the younger brother had one eye on the lady, and the other on the estates, and truly these noble chestnuts, and that park and the Hall yonder, are worth wishing for, without Hawksley to boot. What a rabble there is about the gates!"

"It's to hear our verdict," said the mason pompously. "Yonder is Bun dy talking and swinging his arms; and look at his coat pocket! as many as there are on 'em, the mob won't go without a track apiece."

"Then I shall sit down in the shade of these trees," said the stranger; "I may never be in this part of the country again, and I should like to know the result."

"I wish your honour good morning," said Tablet, hastily; "there's the Justice's carriage at the door, and his worship do n't like waiting."

And away the mason bustled, and was soon seen elbowing a passage through the crowd at the entrance.

"What a world of fools we live in," said the stranger, with a contemptuous curl of the lip as the juryman disappeared; "and yet the arrantest of them may be a judge of life and death; for one that tampers with blood illegally there are a dozen to spill it by form of law. There would be comfort in that for the scrupulous; but conscience is like the musquito, it ceases to sting when you have had a seasoning. Ringwood is dead, and Raby has turned Maroon; the wind blows fair for Walter Tyrrel, and any other of the name may walk the plank."

So saying, Marguerite, for it was her in disguise, settled herself in a reclining attitude against the tree, and with considerable composure awaited the drawing of this part of the scheme in the lottery of life.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Is our whole dissembly appeared. DOGBERRY.

"Murder, gentlemen, is where a man is murderously killed. The killer in such a case is a murderer. Now, murder by poison is as much murder as murder with a sword or a gun: it is the murdering that constitutes murder in the eye of the law. You will bear in mind that murder is one thing and manslaughter is another: therefore if it is not manslaughter it must be murder; and if it is not murder it must be manslaughter. Self-murder has nothing to do with this case, one man cannot commit felo de se on another, that is clearly my view. Gentlemen, I think you can have no difficulty; murder, I say, is murder. The murder of a brother is called fratricide; but it is not fratricide if a man murders his mother. You will make up your minds. You know what mur der is, and I need not tell you what it is not. I repeat, murder is murder, you can retire upon it if you like."

FROM THE STERLING CHRONICLE.

THE coroner's inquest, involving an inquiry into the cause of any sudden termination of human life, is justly considered as one of our most important and valuable institutions, and accordingly its functions are commonly

delegated to the most obtuse and ignorant members of the community. The rich and the intelligent have influence or tact enough to elude its duties, so that the inquisition generally devolves on some dozen of logger-headed individuals, who serve habitually as jurymen for the parish in which they may happen to reside. They follow as implicitly as a flock of sheep the lead of their foreman, whose opinion goes in the wake of the coroner's, like a boat in tow of a ship. The latter personage himself is sometimes little better than a Dogberry, furnished with a few technical terms and legal distinctions which enable him to direct the Random Records of Visitations of God, Found Drowned, Wilful Murder, and Felo de se. Whether the official functionary of ***** belonged to this class will be seen by the evidence.

The preparations for the inquest had been made in the library, a room of ample dimensions, and able to accommodate a much greater number of persons than it contained. A vacant library chair awaited the occupation of the coroner; at the head of a long table, on its right, sat Mr. Richard Tablet, the foreman, and on either side the rest of the jurors, comprising Messrs. Hands, Benson, and Walden, and five other members of the whist club, with serious countenances, all decidedly conscious of the temporary importance with which their office invested them, and as resolutely silent as if they had for once been engaged in a rubber at longs. The lowest on the left, but a head taller than any of the others in stature, the Ranter, rolled about in his chair, his shaggy eyebrows working restlessly up and down, with the more activity, apparently, because his tongue was under restraint, and his hand groped impatiently, from time to time, in the pocket of his coat.

The arm-chair at the bottom of the table was reserved for the coroner's clerk.

As far aloof as the diameter of the room permitted, Mr. Justice Rivers had chosen his place, as motionless, and passionless, and as inexorable as Radamanthus himself — the final judge of eternal bale or bliss. Parallel with the magistrate sate Doctor Bellamy, bowing to any one whose eye he was so fortunate as to catch; whilst St. Kitts occupied a recess, and, with his arms folded, and his back half turned towards the company, gazed intently through a window which looked towards the avenue. Old Mat, the gamekeeper, with his assistants, formed a group apart, one of the latter holding the fatal double-barrelled gun, and the other male domestics of the Hall, and a few of the tenantry they had admitted by favour, completed the presence.

There was no conversation, unless a brief occasional whisper might be called so; and this prevailing silence in the chamber made a sound, that proceeded from the story above, the more remarkable. It was the incessant tread of a heavy foot, not monotonously, but sometimes slow, sometimes quick; occasionally it stopped, but soon resumed its course to and fro, and generally with an emphatic stamp. It was universally understood that this sound was attributable to the distempered pacing of Sir Mark up and down his apartment; and no effort of human eloquence could have had so forcible an effect upon the listeners, as the unceasing tramp — tramp — tramp, overhead. It painted more terribly than any combination of words could have done, the state of the sufferer's mind. The modern tread-mill seems a physical type of that condition of mental torture, where the compelled thought strives vainly to overcome one perpetually revolving misery, without respite, and without progress.

"Dreadful, ain't it?" remarked Mr. Walden, in a whisper, to his neighbour, who only replied by an assenting nod.

"I wish Stubbs would come!" said Mr. Hands, under his breath, to Mr. Benson, who, in answer, pulled out his old-fashioned watch.

The huntsman looked towards the ceiling, and made a gesture, which old Mat acknowledged by a shake of his gray head; the under-keepers, dejected and downcast, seemed transformed into convicted poachers, and some one drew a long, heavy, audible sigh, that interpreted the general feeling.

At this moment the melancholy sound of the foot-fall was lost in the noise of a scuffle, and the clamour of several tongues, above which the stentorian voice of Master Heath, or, as he was commonly called, Bully Heath, the principal butcher of the village, was distinctly recognised.

"I've as good a right," he shouted, "as Dick Tablet, or any of the pack. I'm as marciful as any on 'em — and I'll stick my knife in his tripes as says otherwise!"

"You're no such thing," answered a voice, equally familiar. "You're cruel by law, and so is surgeons."

Here the tumult increased, gradually progressing up stairs to the door of the library, where, at length, the bull-head of the butcher announced him, and then his sky-blue body was seen vehemently struggling for entrance, with the arms of Gregory the constable clinging round his waist. By help of a clutch of the door-post on either side, the brawny bully contrived to haul his carcass within the room, still bellowing like a bull in favour of his humanity, and promising all the cuts and thrusts of the slaughter-house to those who impugned it. In this hopeless case, Gregory left his hold, and began to rub his shins, which had suffered severely from the kicking of the iron-shod high-lows of his antagonist.

"If it please your worship," said the constable, appealing to the Justice, "he wants to sit on the dead body, though he's a carcass-butcher by trade, and cannot sit upon any thing. That's crowner's quest law, all the world over."

At the words "your worship," Bully Heath glanced towards the personage addressed, and in an instant he looked as sheepish as one of his own lambs. "An't please your worship," he cried, "I only said I'd as much marcy as any on 'em; and so I have. If I was for to be cut up to-morrow, my heart would be found in the right place — but it shall be just as your worship pleases."

A significant point of the finger was the only answer from the magistrate. Custom, it is said, reconciles us to all things, and Master Heath enjoyed the custom of Hawksley; he accordingly departed without a bleat, and, as he quietly made his exit, another personage entered, so like the bully in face and person, that it seemed as if the butcher in blue had only been exchanged for a butcher in black. The face of the new comer was quite as red and jovial as the bully's, his forehead as round and shining, his eyes as piggishly small, his nose as snubbish and clubbish, his mouth as like a slash in a beef-steak, with a chin as if he had played for it, and got a double. His body was equally burly with his prototype's, and his well-fatted calf was cased, like the other's, in a glossy top-boot that aimed at taking the shine out of every thing.

Such was the coroner for ———shire, and attorney withal, for he was placed on the rolls before the present high duty on indentures, which makes it a matter of more difficulty for an errand-boy to succeed his employer, and stand in the shoes he formerly blacked. His promotion, however obtained, had been far from slow, and the rapidity of his rise seemed to have influenced his character. He bounced into the room, bobbed a hurried bow at the Justice, threw himself into the appointed chair, and began dabbling the bill of a pen in the inkstand, with the eagerness of a duck's in a gutter. Whatever portion of time may be a jiffy, in half its usual space he had rubbed his bald head, blown his nose, and put on his spectacles, and then, at his best pace, began on a dozen topics at once, as if talking, not walking,

a match against the celebrated Mr. Gurney. As far as the shortest of short-hand could collect, it ran thus: —

"Strange weather, gentlemen, — devilish dirty though? Dick, count the jury. Famous year for birds, they say, — shot seventeen brace myself. Foreman — eh, — Master Tablet? Sharp work, your worship, for one day; two visitations, a found drowned, and an accidental; — posting's unconscionably high, — Mr. Justice, you'll be at the Blue dinner?"

"I rather think not," said the Justice, in a dry tone.

"Sorry for it," resumed the inquisitor. "Capital dinners at the Eagle — very good house — wines excellent, — gentlemen, I need n't lay down — we've met before. Mr. Bundy, have patience — slow and sure. A very well proportioned room indeed, — very. Poor Sir Mark! — witnesses all in attendance, Dick? (the clerk nodded.) It's a melancholy event, — had n't we better open a window! Such a promising young man! — If you please we'll view — where's the body? — Gregory, show the way —" and jumping up from his chair, as if to pick up a child, or save the post, or catch a wasp, the coroner scuttled along the room, and trundled down stairs with his twelve satellites in his train. The domestics and the tenantry, with the common wish of seeing and hearing all they could, joined the procession, and the Justice and the Creole were left to themselves.

Guided by the obsequious Gregory, the coroner and jury soon found themselves in the drawing-room, where the dead body, supported on tressels, awaited their inspection. As they eagerly approached the temporary bier, Squire Ned, who had constituted himself custos of the corpse, rose up, and retired into the adjoining room, as if his feelings shunned the contact of that vulgar curiosity, which too obviously attracted the jury towards the blood-stained remains of Ringwood Tyrrel. The coroner, to whom such sights were familiar, after a momentary glance, turned away to a window, and found his view in a prospect of the park. In the depraved language of a depraved appetite, he had seen spectacles more worth looking at.

"Hic jacet," said the foreman solemnly, "what a melancholy memento of mortality; he must measure six feet."

"Ay, more nor that," said Mr. Benson, scanning the length with the critical eye of a carpenter, and in a moment his pocket-rule was travelling along the body, and the product was an inch and a half above the two yards.

"What matters feet and inches of flesh," exclaimed the loud, harsh voice of the Ranter, "all clay — potter's clay — pipe clay — and clay as makes bricks. — I'll measure his soul for you, length and breadth — what's his body — all flesh is nothing but grass, and here is his'n, cut down, and fit to carry. But where's his soul? his immortal soul, is it gone to glory? or soused head-foremost into burning brimstone? — O, my brethren, think in time of hell, — none of your November bonfires, but flames everlasting, without end — where the more you are broiled, the more you ain't done."

Here he was stopped by the coroner, with his usual hurry.

"Amen — amen, — better another time. Well, gentlemen — what a beautiful room this is! A very fine corpse, eh! — poor young man — who carries snuff? Dr. Bellamy, you've examined the body?"

"I have had that pleasure," replied Old Formality, with an instinctive bow to the corpse, which, during its life, had once done him the honour to become his patient.

"Then, gentlemen," said the coroner, "all we have to do —"

"Not till I have lifted up my voice," said the Ranter, "twenty coroners shan't prevent a word in season; no, nor twenty fiery dragons, — what's the use of death, if it ain't to be improved on? And him as lies here was a scoffer and scorner, — yes, many's the time he has mocked at me, and

threatened to set his heathenish hounds at my heels, but where is he now himself — why, hunted by a tantivy of devils."

A general cry of "shame, shame," arose from the auditors at this brutal sentence, whilst Dick, the huntsman, walked up to the Ranter, and threatened him, with a bitter smile.

"My best thanks, Master Bundy, for putting me up to what young master would have done; his wish was as good as a bidding at any time, and if you show yourself again at the meet I 'll lay 'em on."

"And for my part," said old Mat, "as soon as the quest 's over,— I can't preachify, but I can fight a bit, and never did long so to crack a jaw-bone as yours. Shame on ye — did you ever see a soul go where you say, with a smiling face like that?" and he pointed to the placid features of the corpse. "The man that hits another when he 's down, ar' n't half a man; but the man as belies the dead, as can't answer him, he ar' n't half a quarter o' one;" and with an indignant swing, he turned his broad back on the slanderer.

A general murmur of approbation, assented to the gamekeeper's homely sentiment, while his example was followed by the rest of the dependants, and not a few of the tenants, so that, in a moment, the Ranter found himself in an enviable situation for a man of pugnacious disposition, with a score of challenges to select from, and boxing, wrestling, or cudgelling, at his option. But he was not a man of weak nerves: to the unblushing effrontery of his class he united physical courage and hardihood, and alike regardless of time, place, and person, he stood as unmoved by the dozen fists that were shaken in his face, as unabashed by the general expression of disgust. He lifted up his own huge arms in the position of a letter Y, as if to exhibit his muscular proportions, and was beginning with "Bellow away, you bulls of Bashan, — long horns, and short horns," when the coroner interfered.

"Come, come, Mr. Bundy, time 's precious."

"And so 's eternity," shouted the Ranter, while a foam gathered on his lips, and showed that his zeal was beginning to work and froth like new beer.

"I say I 've to sit on more bodies, and I can't trifle," said the coroner, raising his voice.

"And I says eternity first," said the pertinacious Ranter, "what 's sitting on bodies to sitting on souls? what can you say to that?"

"That souls will keep, and the bodies won't," answered the coroner. "Gentlemen, you 've all viewed? — seen all you can see — follow me —" and, like an old Young Rapid he trotted off, followed by his company, the Ranter contriving to be the last that left the room.

The magistrate, who had been left with the Creole in the interim, had availed himself of the opportunity to address certain inquiries to his companion.

"At the return of these wiseacres," he said, "you will be troubled, sir, with a hundred questions, as much tending to the purpose as to the discovery of the longitude. Allow me, therefore, in the mean time, to put a few of my own, for the sake of public justice as well as my personal satisfaction."

The Creole bowed, and the Justice proceeded.

"Allow me to ask then, sir, upon what terms were the two brothers at the time of the catastrophe?"

"I believe, sir," answered the Creole, with some hesitation, "they were upon the usual terms."

"The nature of which," said the magistrate, "was no secret to any person of common penetration. Of widely dissimilar habits, and, consequently, of opposite feelings and sentiments, they must have been subject to frequent disagreements, if not occasional rancour and enmity. May I ask, sir, the date of their last quarrel?"

"There was some difference," answered St. Kitts, "or rather a mere momentary heat, springing out of a most trivial cause that occurred, if I recollect rightly, on the very morning of that day which we have so much reason to deplore."

"So, sir," remarked the Justice, his voice gradually assuming its severity "there was ill-blood in the case; and Raby, whose ignorance and dislike of the sports of the field were sufficiently notorious, who was never known before to fire a gun, or to desire to fire one, — who professed, I must say hypocritically, a repugnance to kill even a partridge — can you possibly assign, sir, any motive for his sudden assumption of the character of a sportsman?"

"None whatever, sir," answered the Creole; "but it is difficult to scrutinize human motives. We all have our moments of eccentricity."

"And some of us our moments of malignity," said the Justice, as if invested with his imaginary black cap. "It is then your opinion, sir, that to the violent quarrel that took place on the morning of the mur——— "

The magistrate was about to add another syllable sufficiently indicative of a foregone conclusion, when the door opened, and the coroner led in his squad of inquisitors, talking all the way to save time.

"Well, gentlemen, you 've seen the body, — warm weather, Mr. Justice, won't keep long, — Mr. Bundy, do n't talk, — what 's the time, Dick? — I forgot last night to wind up, — very simple case, gentleman; lies in small compass, — where 's the witness? — Dick, swear in Mr. Walter Tyrrel."

The Creole took the book from the clerk with some emotion, and repeated an assenting "So help me God." He then proceeded to relate the occurrences of the evening up to the fatal discharge into the moving fern, suppressing only the verbal directions which he had himself given for the aim of the weapon.

"That will do, sir," said the coroner; and he was adjusting himself to address the jury, when, after a suppressed remonstrance from the foreman, Mr. Jenkins, more untractable than Tablet had anticipated, persisted in putting a few questions to the witness.

"By your favour, Mr. Walter Tyrrel," was his first interrogation, "and I should wish you particularly to call to mind the circumstance, and to take time to consider before answering, Did he jump up a yard high, as they say people do when they are shot?"

"I saw nothing of the kind," answered the Creole.

"That is very odd," remarked the pompous Mr. Jenkins. "Perhaps you will be as good as inform, sir, where he put his hand first — his side, or his head, or his back? Some say feeling is in the spinal marrow, and some say in the heart, and others say in the brain."

"My observation was not so particular, sir," said the Creole, with a look of annoyance.

"One more question, sir," said the persevering Mr. Jenkins, "and I have done. Perhaps you could name the maker of the gun?"

"Pshaw, any body you like, sir," interrupted the impatient coroner. "Gentlemen, you 've heard the witness — evidence very clearly given — Dr. Bellamy will favour us with his post mortems."

The personage thus appealed to, proceeded with great gravity, and a technical minuteness equally tiresome and revolting, to describe, scientifically, the complicated injuries the body had received, concluding with his decided mature professional opinion on oath, that the receipt of the united charges of a double-barrelled gun into the human chest would be sufficient to cause the death of the individual.

"Thank ye, doctor, very clear," said the coroner. "Well, gentlemen, you have heard all — right lobe — left lobe — sternum — laceration — hemorrhage, and so forth — capital evidence — need n't read it over — Gre-

gory, go and order my chaise — gentlemen, I am going to sum up. Here 's a young gentleman — heir to a fine estate — an elder brother shot by a younger brother — shot by mistake for a rabbit. You must dismiss all prejudice, and so forth. Very ugly case — can't be two opinions. Gentlemen, you 'll consult together — and if there 's a doubt, you 'll give the murderer a benefit, — Dick, take down the verdict."

A pause succeeded for some minutes: the twelve jurors turned round and buzzed together in a corner, like so many blue-bottles on a window-pane. and the voi e of Mr. Trot at length arose above the rest.

"Fratricide be d—d. I have heard of homicide and suicide, and I 'll take which of them sides you like."

Then there followed a fresh buzzing, during which Tablet convinced Messrs. Jenkins and Trot that there was but one way of being unanimous; that men of different opinions would never agree between this and doomsday, and that in such a case dinner must be postponed 'sine die.' "

"Gentlemen," said the coroner, "are you all agreeable?"

"Very," responded the foreman. "We are all in favour of Wilful Murder."

"And, gentlemen, allow me to say, a very proper finding," said the magistrate, rising up, "and the only one consistent with the conscientious discharge of your painful duty. In the name and on behalf of public justice I thank you for the verdict you have given."

"And I quite agree with his worship," said the coroner. "Sound judgment — a right decision — very correct indeed. Poor Sir Mark Tyrrel — it 's a shocking thing for a father — Dick, make out a warrant — a strange thing, your worship, if the Blues should get their man in — Yellow used to walk over the course. I hav' n't had much shooting this season — I shall come some day, Maf, and look at your birds. By the by, if you know of a good cocking-spaniel — I like 'em oldish and slow, for I 'm getting into that way myself — ready, eh, Dick? — there, give it to Gregory, and catch who can, — it 's forty pound. Your worship, I 've the honour to say good day, — good bye, gentlemen, you 've done your duty, — Dr. Bellamy, your most obedient — Mr. Walter, I 'm yours. Look sharp, Dick, for I 'm late for the Eagle," — and spurred by the anticipation of the election dinner, the coroner departed with an activity and speed that seemed purposely intended to distinguish him from his subjects — the quick from the dead. In fact, before the bowing head of Old Formality rose again to its perpendicular, the personage he intended to honour was out of sight. The stone-mason, emulating the example of the doctor, kept obsequiously ducking at the Justice, and the jurors copied every bend of their foreman as regularly as the crew of a cutter take the stroke from the steersman; after which ceremony they hustled out of the room as from a theatre when the performance is over.

The Ranter, eager to exhort the crowd outside, was one of the foremost that quitted the Hall, but he had scarcely stepped into the air when a shower of paper, in such fragments as are used at a theatre to represent the flakes of a fall of snow, was hurled in his face. It was accompanied by a deep execration from Squire Ned, and an address, in which, contrary to his usual custom, but showing that he was more than commonly moved, he made use of all the pronouns.

"Take it back," he cried in a voice that thrilled with passion, "Heathen and Infidel in your face, and liar to boot! — have you no more Christian use for pious tracts than to turn them into libels, by laying them on the bodies of the dead? Why, the poor cold breast you put it upon, has more feeling than yours. *You* convert sinners! — *You* draw souls to God!"

"Hark to un, boys! hark to the Squire!" shouted the whipper-in, mindful of his old grudge against the Ranter. "Look at the ugly spiteful face

of the varmint. Why, if he comed near my death-bed, I should be like to say, Here 's the ould one a fetching me afore my time!"

"Take the last of it!" said the Squire, throwing a reserved handful of the scraps at Uriah; "and another time when you dare to slander a corpse —"

"Lord above!" exclaimed the Ranter, with an appropriate elevation of his hands and eyes, "here 's a coil about a broken potsherd, the carcass of a wicked reprobate — fit only for the dogs as ate up Jezebel——"

He was unable to utter more, for the maimed hand of the Squire was at his throat, and a very unequal struggle instantly commenced. Perhaps there were few of the spectators who did not immediately long to be concerned in it, and on the same side; but, with the honourable and peculiar love of fair play that characterizes Englishmen, they fell back by common consent, and formed a ring, as inviolable as the lists of chivalry. The contest promised necessarily to be of brief duration, for in bulk and length the Ranter had greatly the advantage, and with his long arms, and a head taller than his opponent, he stood over the Squire like a crane at a wharf, with the apparent power of lifting him at pleasure. In fact, he several times raised the other off his legs with the greatest ease, but, with cat-like dexterity, the Squire continued always to alight on his feet, so that, though Uriah occasionally tossed him up and down almost like a nurse-maid with a child, he could not accomplish the nursery feat of rolling him on the floor. Once or twice the Ranter tried the "Flying Horse," which consists in the wrestler's pitching his adversary over his own head; but with the quickness of lightning Ned shifted his grip, with his hands planted in the enemy's loins so awkwardly, that the latter was foiled at each attempt. The interest to the spectators became intense. They correspondingly swayed their bodies, and rose on tip-toe, or stooped, in eager sympathy with the motions of the adverse party; they panted, and strung their own sinews, and many a palpitation anticipated the result of a seemingly decisive effort: but coolness, skill, and the inspiriting influence of earnest affection and a good cause, made amends for any physical inferiority, and maintained a struggle of unexpected endurance. As for Old Mat, who had been a wrestler in his youth, he had long set his teeth, with a determination that would have bitten a bullet in half, whilst his hands were clenched with a grasp almost equal to the cracking of a cocoa-nut, but — in less time than *but* can be written, — giving way it seemed with his heart-strings, and like a stroke of paralysis, his sinews were struck powerless, as he saw the living column suddenly lose its centre of gravity, and descend with velocity towards the earth. The Squire was obviously undermost, yet striking the ground, as it seemed, violently with one foot, and giving way with the other, for the evolution was too instantaneous to be distinctly perceived, the position of the falling bodies was reversed, and without knowing how it had been effected, and scarcely believing that it was done, the delighted circle saw the champion of Ringwood rising upon his knees from the body of the spiritual ruffian, who lay stunned upon the ground.

A loud and hearty shout welcomed this grateful termination of the affray, and at the same time, suggested to the Squire the impropriety of such a tumult in front of the house of mourning.

"Do n't open, boys," he said, "do n't open, but go away quietly; I was wrong myself, — but my blood was up to hear *him* abused, — do n't hang about, but go home — you 've heard the verdict — I say nothing to it — my thought's my own, I hope you 've saddled the right horse, that 's all,—" and, turning sharply round, the speaker re-entered the Hall, to resume his melancholy station beside the corpse.

"He 's an odd man, the Squire," remarked Tablet, a little offended at the impeachment of the verdict, "and he has odd notions: for instance, that a

man with one eye can see better than twelve men with two eyes a-piece ;" and with this sarcastic allusion to Ned's deficiency, he took leave of his brethren and commenced his stately march down the avenue. But the stranger he had conversed with in the morning had disappeared. As for the Ranter, he had risen from the ground during the Squire's address to the crowd, and was striding away far ahead, consoling himself with a determination to preach in his own chapel the next Sabbath, from the 4th chapter of Genesis, 10th, 11th, and 12th verses, with special reference to the late events at the Hall.

Thus terminated an inquest, the faithful record of which may assist the formation of a decided opinion, by those persons whose minds are still unsettled upon the point, whether the coroner's court ought to be an open or a close one, and likewise, as to the propriety of remunerating the jurors for such services. It may suggest, besides, some reasonable doubts, whether even surgeons and butchers might not entertain as mild and merciful views as the grazier who fattens the ox for killing, or the cutler who makes the scalpel. The present is not an age for letting any particular class of the community lie under ban ; and perhaps some liberal senator may be induced to entitle Mr. Scales, by bill, to possess common humanity, and declare Mr. Brodie not to be a savage by Act of Parliament.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

What child have I? Alas ! I have but one,
And him you would tear from me.

THE ROMAN FATHER.

Have the Fates then conspired, and quite bereft
My drooping years of all the blest content
That age partakes of, by the sweet aspect
Of their well-nurtured issue ?

TAILOR.

IT IS a curious fact, but one which must be familiar to almost every man's experience, that under circumstances of intense anxiety and excitement, the power of the organs of sight and hearing will become extended in a very extraordinary degree. To the eager watcher and the listener, distant objects and sounds are distinctly perceptible, far beyond the range of any other eye or ear; and the expectant literally receives intelligence as supernaturally exclusive as the announcement to the mourner in the ballad : —

I hear a voice you cannot hear
That says I must not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see,
That beckons me away.

Thus, strange as it may appear, the words, and only those, of the verdict found their way upwards through a substantial oaken floor, and were heard by Sir Mark as plainly as if they had been whispered close to his ear. From that moment, but the occurrence was unmarked below, the tramp of his foot ceased, for he had sunk into a chair, and when the Justice at length entered to communicate the result, a significant nod of the head from the Baronet intimated that it was already known, and checked the repetition of the unwelcome words.

"My good old friend!" said the Justice, advancing to the Baronet, and taking his hand between both his own, "I have no comfort to offer."

"God forgive them!" said Sir Mark; "God forgive them! But I think all Christian charity has left the world;" and rising up hastily, he resumed his walk across the room. — "It was not for me to fly in the face of the laws of my country and oppose an inquest; but I do cry shame on the verdict. With my last breath I would speak up against it; but they have been blooded once, and they would pull down the whole herd."

"My good friend," said the Justice, "be composed; it is a heavy calamity, and the last blow is the worst. But, as Christians, we can only say 'God's will be done.' In arraigning the decrees of human justice, we impeach the divine code in which all laws have their origin."

"I can bow to God," answered the afflicted father; "I can submit to Him who gave and who took away my firstborn — but I cannot bow and submit to man, who would deprive me of the other. Next to our Heavenly Father, who judges all, I have as a father the best right to judge my own son."

"That is unquestionable," answered the magistrate; "but alas! with some rare exceptions, the balance is seldom held so equitably in a parent's hands, but that if crime preponderated in one scale, he would throw his heart as a counterpoise into the other."

"Ay, heart and head, and life and soul to boot," exclaimed Sir Mark, earnestly. "I'd stake my salvation on his innocence! But we live in a cruel world: one would think they were neither fathers nor brothers, to open full-mouthed at such a challenge, as if our whole breed had come from Cain: why he was tender-hearted to girlishness, even to bird and beast — and if I had left him to his own gentle ways, — the Almighty forgive me! — his poor brother would be alive at this hour."

"There is but One," said the Justice, "who knows the human heart; and he has told us that it is deceitful and desperately wicked: it is in His power only to know the truth; but as far as human sagacity and penetration, and, I must say, a conscientious exercise of the judgment extend ——"

"Enough! enough!" said the Baronet; "I read your mind. But if old Mark Tyrrel stands alone in his own opinion, he will go down to the grave with it — that a murderer never sprang from his loins. That is my judgment on my unhappy boy; and had I a voice that would ring from one end of England to t' other, I would halloo him back this moment to my house and heart."

"I would that it were possible," said the Justice, "for it would shine like the scriptural bow of promise on the tears of one who sheds them day and night! Oh, my friend, you may conceive what a Brutus-like trying conflict there has been between conscience and affection ere I could come to such a decision, when I tell you that the fate of my own beloved daughter depends possibly on that of your surviving son."

"Yes, Kate told me something of the kind," said the Baronet, resuming his seat, in a musing attitude, "but grief makes us selfish: and I forgot there was a child in the world but my own. Poor Grace — poor Grace — Misery has been running riot at old and young!"

"Till to-day," said the Magistrate, passing his hand across his eyes, "we had fears for her reason. That danger, according to the physicians, is gone by; but, for my own part, I still tremble at her hallucinations. One whom I will not mention is too obviously in her thoughts; and, indeed, his name frequently escapes her in her extemporaneous whisperings."

A flush of exquisite agony passed over the countenance of Sir Mark, as if at the sudden application of an unendurable rack, extorting by torture a confession of the presumptuous emptiness of human schemes, and the utter hopelessness of their defeat. It seemed to the afflicted father, as if a divine jealousy of his designs against the dispensations of Providence, had required of him, like a second Abraham, the sacrifice of his son; but unlike the

Patriarch, he had not averted the blow by a timely submission. In this spirit of humiliation, he took the hand of the Magistrate, and addressed him in a style not the less serious or heartfelt that it was associated with old familiar images.

"My good friend, it is through our own fault that we are so dreadfully thrown out — what is past is past — but we should have done better if we had listened to another voice than our own. It was my favourite cast towards Hawksley with Ringwood, but the Almighty forbids. I shall never meddle with match-making again. I am as good as down. No buck was ever hit more cleanly — straight, straight, through the heart.—The world 's done with me, but I would have the sun shine and the fawns play in it when I am gone. It may please God some day to turn men's hearts, and bring back the wanderer to where he was roused — and if he should come to his father's oldest friend, and say, 'Let me be your son,' would you say him nay?"

The Justice hesitated. That a murderer should go unhanged was to his mind equivalent to a moral earthquake; but the proposal, moreover, that the felon should marry his daughter, he considered could only have come from a Father like King David, "mad with grief;" and he was meditating a suitable answer when the door opened and Mrs. Hamilton entered, accompanied by the Creole and Squire Ned.

The Baronet rose up, and with assumed firmness, went to meet his sister, whom he embraced, and then placed her in a chair beside his own.

"I know it all, Kate," he said; "it is a cruel sentence, but I can bear it till I believe it. All the world to one is long odds, but if I stand alone——"

"No, not alone," said Mrs. Hamilton; "my voice shall rise with yours for the mildest, kindest being that ever breathed. They are murderers that call him so."

"That is true, Kate," said the Baronet; "as well stab a man as his good name. It was never laid to us before. Bating in a field of battle or fair lists, a Tyrrel was never charged with bloodshed."

"Except Sir *Walter* Tyrrel, — who shot King Rufus," said the Squire; and, as he spoke, he fixed his eye so intently on the Creole, that the latter winced under it. The solitary organ seemed to him as that one eye which painters sometimes use as a type of the Omniscient. It was a searching glance that penetrated his very soul; and from that instant, a new alarm was planted in a bosom already beset by all the anxious inquietude that belongs to conscious guilt. The course of crime never did run smoother than that of true love; it is equally subject to accidents and obstacles, to rumour, jealousy, suspicion, and detection. Thus, Ringwood was dead; his brother was an outcast, and his father, by his own confession, had received his death-blow: the path to the goal the Creole aimed at seemed straight and open, but at each step unforeseen difficulties arose, unexpected dangers presented themselves, and parties never dreamed of threw themselves in the way in attitudes adverse to his success. Hence he proceeded, environed with terrors, like a man who is walking upon ice, which every now and then, by an audible crack, gives him warning of the insecurity of his foundation. It was not, therefore, without some internal shudderings and misgivings that he became the auditor of an earnest consultation, how his fugitive kinsman might be discovered and induced to return to a home where he would be received with open arms.

"It is dreadful to think," said Mrs. Hamilton, "to what rash act this cruel verdict may drive so sensitive a nature; but he ought never to have fled. Had I been you, Walter, I would have clung to his knees; he should have dragged me through bush and brier, through fire and water, before I would have lost sight of him to his destruction."

"My dear aunt," said the Creole, looking down, "I was unprepared for what I did. Now I should, perhaps, act otherwise."

"And sometimes," said the Justice, "in pity to the individual, we forget our duty to the community. Had you apprehended him, Sir, on the spot———"

"For the love of heaven," exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, "for my brother's sake—for poor Grace's sake———"

"Hush, Kate," said the Baronet, with a faint smile, such as state criminals used formerly to effect on the scaffold: "it is only the creaking of the wheels of the Juggernaut. They must not be locked, though I am in the dust before them. But it is the fault of my old friend's head, and not his heart; for poor Grace's sake, Justice, I would have you speak otherwise; but for my part, I say, issue warrant after warrant; pursue him by land and water; call him a felon, and put him in the dock—and old Mark Tyrrel will stand up for his innocence there as he does now. Yes, if the Judge had his black cap on his head—" and the parent rose from his chair and stood up as if in the very presence he had drawn.

"My good old friend," said the Justice, "I fear your own impression will weigh little against direct evidence; the same circumstances which have just swayed twelve men in their decision, would, probably, influence twelve others."

"Never!" said the Baronet, with great emphasis, "never! I think better of my kind."

"So do n't I," said the Squire; "a cross of the murderer in them all—wish you had seen the Jury gaping at poor Ringwood: won't shed blood, but like to look at it—like to talk of it—and prefer wholesale to retail; —would n't trust the babe unborn with 'em, though that 's known to be innocent—sure to be found guilty—and hanged, by Jove!" And the countenance of the speaker took an ascetic expression that matched his sentiment. Grief acts differently on various temperaments, and with Squire Ned it had taken a querulous tone of discontent with all around him. It would scarcely be exaggeration to say that he felt as much as the parent himself, but he felt in a peculiar manner. In Ringwood, he had lost not merely a son, but a brother, for whom he had all a father's affection without any of his authority. In his heart, Ringwood had no rival; it might be said that he loved him, but only liked others.

It was an exclusive absorbing devotion, a sort of idolatry, that might have made him exclaim, "one God, one Ringwood," as a lady of quality said of Farinelli, with a less excusable fervour. The loss of such an object was a total bereavement, as though, like Job, he had lost at one blow, house, children, flocks, and herds. But he did not bear his calamity with the patience of the man of Uz: the wound rankled, and in the bitterness of his heart he was ready to curse and rail. He mourned, not as the dove mourning for her love, but with a harsh fretful note, at jar with all creation. Hence his harsh sentence on the jury, an ebullition merely of a misanthropical feeling, towards the whole race, for surviving his favourite; and hence the revival of his old suspicions against the Creole, which he adopted with a tenacity that promised he would hate as inveterately as he had loved. To this source must be ascribed a portion of the interest he took in the exculpation of Raby, a person he otherwise regarded with much indifference, indeed, it was inconceivable to his exclusive feelings, and somewhat grating to them, how the claims of the living brother rose in such rivalship with those of the dead. Such a diversion of the parental grief even excited some dissatisfaction; but the subdued sorrow of Mrs. Hamilton appeared, to the distorted mind of the Squire, like palpable apathy, not the less irritating that he accounted for it by an old imputed preference for the surviving

nephew. With all his sympathies thus out of tune, he was accosted by the Justice.

"As a friend of Sir Mark's, I would request your opinion, sir, wha measures should be adopted in this distressing crisis? I mean principally,' added the magistrate, lowering his voice, "with regard to the one who has absconded?"

"Raby, eh?" answered the Squire, abstractedly, "advertise — post hand-bills — offer a reward — ferret him out any how — and shoot Brown Bastard."

The conscience of the Creole made him start at the latter part of the sentence, and look anxiously towards the speaker; but Ned's thought had no reference to St. Kitts; it had wandered to an act resembling an old heathenish custom, being nothing less than the immolation of a favourite animal to the manes of the deceased.

"Shoot whom, sir?" inquired the magistrate, his black eyebrows mechanically falling between doubt and disapprobation.

"A horse," answered the Squire, hastily, and casting his one eye towards the Baronet. "None of mine, or he should never be crossed again,— nobody after Ringwood."

"Take him, Ned — he is your own," said Sir Mark, "but no more shooting; turn him out for life;" and, at this final disposal of his present to his ill-fated son, the eyes of the father overflowed.

"My dear friend, be composed — subdue this weakness," said the Justice.

"I have held up," said the Baronet, "till the Squire named his name. It stands for nothing now; but my heart will go towards the sound, though it 's a false halloo," and struck by the force of his own comparison, which the fox-hunter will well appreciate, the tears again gushed from his eyelids. "It 's all taken out of me," he said, as he brushed away the drops for the second time. "I shall never be a man again," and he recommenced his walk up and down the chamber, but after a turn or two he stopped short in front of the Justice: "You think I 'm womanish; I know you do; but I 'm dead spent, and out of heart. I 've hardly been at rack or manger since he died, — but it 's easy for a father who has not lost a son, to say, Compose yourself, to one that has."

"A man, on a quiet pony, calling out 'Hold hard!' to a man on a hard-mouthed, sixteen hands horse, that is running away with him," added the Squire, and having given the Justice this taste of his splenetic quality, he unceremoniously left the room, to resume his station near the beloved corse, like Isabella, in the Decameron, beside her pot of basil.

"Poor Ned! — as a hare to her form," said the Baronet, as the Squire closed the door after him. "He 's at odds with every thing; but he is hit hard, and his wound 's sore, it will never heal kindly: mark my words, he will skulk away some day, and turn a hermit, or something of the sort."

"He sits by the dead day and night," said Mrs. Hamilton to the Justice, "and to judge by his manner, to myself especially, he grudges and resents every thought or tear that is bestowed upon the living. It is like the wonderful love of David and Jonathan, except that I doubt if any love can surpass the love of women. For instance, that of poor Grace," she added adroitly, "for my unhappy nephew. If I know any thing of the female heart, she will cling to him the more firmly, because the world deserts him; she will attach herself to his fate the more devotedly, because it is unfortunate — the faith she has plighted will become her religion; and you may make her a martyr, but not a convert."

"If I understand you, madam," answered the magistrate, his black brows descending till they mingled with his eyelashes, "the more reason my

daughter has to repent her rash choice, the more obstinately she will persist in it; the more convinced of the correctness of her father's views in the past, the less she will confide in them for the future; in short, that she will love your nephew the more, because, by so doing, she will show the less affection for her parent."

"Indeed, sir," answered Mrs. Hamilton, earnestly, "I am incapable of so slandering our dear Grace. I do not know a daughter less likely to fail in duty and affection than your own, but there is a limit beyond which parental authority ought not to stretch, indeed cannot, without presumption: a father may justifiably forbid an improper or imprudent engagement, but in dictating to the affections, and prescribing a given object, he is infringing on the rights of nature, perhaps running counter to a wiser arrangement."

"How, madam!" exclaimed the Justice, "a wiser arrangement! is experience nothing? judgment nothing? circumspection nothing? that the child can make a wiser selection than the father?"

"I was alluding," said Mrs. Hamilton, "to a higher power; the same Being who ordained the tides, and gave the heavenly spheres their direction, may concern himself with the attractions and impulses of the human heart —at least we have reason to think so. Do you not *now* bless Heaven fervently, with me, that Grace's affections were not engaged, irrevocably engaged, to poor Ringwood?"

The Justice was silent to this appeal, but the Baronet clasped his hands with an emphatic "Thank God!" "My good friend," he said, "hark to Kate. It 's the first comforting note I have heard. But Providence takes care of its own; I am ripe fruit, and should soon have fallen, if the bough had n't been shaken, but poor Grace's dear little heart was too young and too good to be broken along with mine. Let us bless the Almighty for that mercy. Had our own wills been done, we should have been as cruel as the ancient emperor—Maxentius was n't it? that chained a dead body to a living one."

"I confess the force of the comparison," said the Justice, upon whom a classical example was seldom lost. "I fully coincide in the consolatory reflection, and am truly grateful to the source it came from," here he bowed to Mrs. Hamilton; —"but I should be still more thankful at the escape of my dear daughter from such an afflicting destination, if she were not subject to a dispensation quite as hopeless as the other would have been, and still more subject to acute regret."

"Oh, not so—not so!" exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, passionately. "Thinking as you think, it would, indeed, be a worse fate than the other: it would be desolation and madness—but ask Grace herself, for she had it in her keeping, —ask her could there be a better heart, one more fervent and diffuse in its affection than my dear Raby's. For his father, his brother, for me, or for his cousin there," —she pointed to the Creole, —"he would have laid down his life."

The Magistrate shook his head incredulously.

"He has not common justice," continued Mrs. Hamilton, with increasing energy, "why tax him alone? why suspect none else? why not as soon accuse Walter there?"

"I am *here*, aunt," said the Creole, quietly.

"And I would you were elsewhere," retorted Mrs. Hamilton, sharply, "seeking for your wronged, slandered kinsman. If harm comes to him, the blame will lie at your door."

"And at mine, too, madam," said the Justice, "for if your nephew be any where within the three kingdoms——"

"My thanks, my best thanks for your cruel kindness," sobbed the lady, and covering her face with her handkerchief, she hurried out of the room in an ecstasy of tears.

"After your aunt, St. Kitts," said the Baronet, "and make your peace with her. Poor Kate! There is no generosity like a woman's. Shame on me to say so, but I never loved them both equally, and as she knew the eldest had the call, she gave the best half of her own heart to the other. But I am punished for making favourites — the one I stood upon is gone — and here I am — ruined, ruined for ever!"

"This is a world of trials," said the Justice, "where our sins bring on us punishments from the supreme tribunal as certainly as in the courts below. I am convinced that all our several chastenings may be traced to some such infractions of the divine laws. As such, it becomes us to receive the judgment with reverence and submission, and I feel assured that no man will set a better example of resignation and respect to the Power above us, than the best, and oldest, and dearest of my friends."

With these words, the Justice again took the hand of the Baronet in his own, and a fervent benediction was exchanged, by way of farewell; but when in conclusion Sir Mark attempted to send his love to Grace, it stuck, like the amen of Macbeth, in his throat. Twice he essayed, but the words refused to come, for they conveyed an epitaph as well as a greeting: "See him once again, he will not be with us long," he said in a broken voice; and arm in arm the two fathers descended to gaze upon a face, pale, cold, and still as marble, but, alas! without its durability.

As they entered the drawing-room, a favourite black terrier, quite a dwarf, that had been watching at the door, rushed in between the Justice's legs, and took his place beside the body, for he rivalled the Squire himself in attachment and fidelity to the deceased.

"Look at Nip," said the Baronet, pointing out the dog to his companion. "How every thing loved him — down to the brutes!"

"More than some Christians," said the Squire, snappishly, perhaps secretly offended at the habitual composure of the Magistrate's countenance.

"Nay, I hope not, Ned," said Sir Mark. "At all events it was a Christian-like hand that strewed these flowers and sweet-herbs."

"Deborah's doing," said the Squire, still more tartly: "an old fool for her pains! — Do n't want 'em, as sweet as a nut." So saying, he kissed the cold forehead, and the father followed his example.

"My poor boy, my poor boy," murmured the latter, as he bent over the remains of his son, whilst, for a minute, his whole frame shook with a manly struggle to keep down a burst of grief. The Justice, in the mean while, had grasped one of the hands, but not without exciting the peculiar jealousy of the Squire, who watched the action with evident uneasiness; his eyebrows twitched, and he screwed his mouth, as if suffering a pang of bodily pain. "The more he 's handled," he muttered, "the sooner he 'll change."

The Justice made no answer, but, like the father, turned silently away, whilst the Squire with characteristic eagerness jumped up, to attend them to the door, which he closed behind them, with something of the self-congratulation of a miser whose treasure had been exposed to unhallowed eyes. So diversified are the modes of feeling incident to human nature!

In another, and a distant room, emotions of a very different class agitated a solitary bosom. Instead of following Mrs. Hamilton, as Sir Mark had recommended, the Creole had retired to his own chamber; for the first time breathing freely as he escaped from a conversation, which had kept his soul in a perpetual pant of anxiety and apprehension. Directly after locking the door, which he did mechanically, he stood stock-still, as if stunned and stupified, and with fixed eyes tried to recollect every word and sentence, some of which had made his very heart flutter in his throat. Above all, his aunt's bitter reproach, and her hypothetical assumption of his criminality, gave him the utmost alarm: he found another person in addition to the Squire, who would watch his future conduct with vigilance and scrutinize it severely;

his fear even suggested doubts whether eventually their lives might not become incompatible with the safety of his own. A shudder of horror thrilled him as he contemplated that thus propelled in proportionate progression, the mass of crime increasing like the avalanche in its course, might swell to an enormous amount, involving by necessity the danger of complicated plots and multiplied concealments. The ordeal he had just passed had besides excited in him considerable misgivings as to his own firmness, whether in extremity his conscience could bear the probe without flinching; nor had he any reason to be satisfied with his skill in playing his part, for in allusion to his sentimental lamentations over Ringwood, the Squire had told him sarcastically that "he sounded like a muffled drum, dismal, but hollow."

The decided opinion and vigorous measures of the Magistrate, made it too probable that Raby would be discovered; an examination might lead to a different account of the catastrophe, and the peculiar circumstances under which the homicide had been persuaded to flight. Suspicion would thus acquire a decided direction, and a presumptive motive would suggest itself to account for the share that he had himself had in spiriting away his surviving kinsman. Thus the very persuasion of his cousin's guilt, which had at first appeared so propitious to his schemes, became ultimately a probable source of his own detection, and he felt all the embarrassment and alarm of a thief who finds himself surprised by a fall of snow, wherein he is unavoidably leaving tracks of his own course. Most eagerly he adopted his aunt's suggestion, that Raby might be impelled by desperation to some act of suicide; but such a termination was too uncertain to have much influence in allaying his fears, and it was therefore necessary to devise some scheme for ensuring the perpetuity of the other's absence. Joined with these considerations, a more intimate knowledge of the character of Marguerite had raised in him some doubts of the genuineness of the certificate of his legitimacy, and the magnitude of the estates would be apt to produce claimants ready to dispute the validity of the document. The wealth he coveted, and which he had reckoned upon as all but within his grasp, might in this manner pass away from him; whilst on the other hand, his love promised almost to a certainty a successless issue. Every account of Grace's deep grief, and unshaken adherence to Raby's cause, concurred to establish the correctness of Mrs. Hamilton's prediction, that it would prove an attachment which would but become more intense under persecution; and indeed this part of his prospect had faded almost into nothingness, as when the broad day-light breaks through the tattered remnants of a morning dream.

Even thus frail are the edifices which the wicked erect on unhallowed foundations: fabrics fair but false as the phantom palaces of the fabled Lamia, "whose furniture was like Tantalus's gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions." Indeed the situation of the Creole enthralled by a similar serpentine sin, closely paralleled that of Menippus Lycius, when before the eyes of the deluded votary of the enchantress, "she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant."

It would be difficult to describe the agony produced by such complicated feelings especially aggravated as they were by his being alone; a prey to unavailing remorse, with which none could sympathize; to disturbed fears, which none could allay or depreciate; to unlawful wishes, with none to participate; to dark and desperate schemings, unadvised, unassisted, unencouraged. In such a gloomy hour, the companionship of a confederate fiend even might be preferable to utter solitude, and as the Creole yearned for the presence of his designing foster-mother, he pronounced her name with a sigh that bordered on a groan.

The invocation was of some efficacy. It is true that Marguerite did not rise bodily before him, but her image confronted him in his mind's eye, with

her black orbs flashing in scorn, and her lip curling into a sneering smile at his pusillanimity.

"Is this Walter Tyrrel?" she seemed to cry, like one of the weird sisters, —"the Sir Walter hereafter? Is this the future husband of Grace Rivers, who resigns his chance because his rival is an outlaw, driven into the bush Is this the brave defier of Ringwood, whose courage droops when his enemy lies a clod at his foot? He talked of becoming a cayman, but he is dwindled to a mere lizard: he had the aspirings of a young eagle, but his flight is the puny flight of the bonito. He promised to launch thunderbolts, and is scared at the casting of a squib. Then is he become indeed a bastard, a slave, and the son of a slave, only fit for the buckra to deride with his tongue, to buffet with his hand, and spurn with his foot."

Thus whispered the devilish spirits of his female Mephistophiles, drowning the small still voice of conscience in his ear, and deadening all the promptings of natural compunction. Unlike the spectral apparitions that alarmed Macbeth, or the professional phantoms that appalled Richard the Third, the evil influence paraded before him a triumphant pageantry, in which the crowning objects of love, ambition, and avarice, bore conspicuous parts, and the flimsy, fraudulent texture of such unholy shows, base forgeries merely to entrap the living soul, was again forgotten. In a mood fit for such a task, he sat down to write to his friend Woodley of St. James's Street, in whose house, it will be remembered, he had advised Raby to seek a refuge. Between this gentleman and St. Kitts there existed an old college friendship, if such a term may be debased to designate one of those heartless leagues, which owe their origin to a companionship in vice and villany. Some underhand confederacy in a gambling transaction had added to congeniality of disposition the tie of mutual secrecy, and in writing to this party, the Creole knew he was addressing an unscrupulous agent, who would bring to the execution of his wishes both ability and fidelity. Thanks to a triple veil of hypocrisy, and his habitual caution, this feature of the Creole's college character had escaped detection; the remembrance of former successes considerably reassured him on the subject of his future delinquencies, and his style even amounted to levity, in the course of penning the following billet to his old associate:—

"Dear Deuce-Ace,

"To save troublesome explanations, read the enclosed; seal, and deliver it 'when called for.' The game is good. I hold winning cards if you play well up to my hand. One deal, and out! and the stakes—better than a slam at spicy!!!

"A snake stopped the march of a Roman army; but would it not be pitiful if my progress up the avenue of Tylney Hall, as its *master*, mind, should be stopped by a worm? Genius, 'book-worm.' You remember a specimen at college. Moreover, with a bill of love, signed, dated, and accepted, in his hand, he stands between a certain Grace, and a certain graceless.

"You must ship him off somewhere. The sea is not so confined or over-stocked, but it may bear another *Gull* on it. I am not so interested in the venture as to require that the vessel so freighted be A I.

"I must trouble you to stand God-father to him, in giving him an alias, and you may help him to a hundred on my account; but he has means of his own. Scare him heartily, confirm all my *facts*, and enforce all my arguments, I should have said *back* my *gammon*.

"In serving an old pal, a wealthy one that is to be, you may do better for yourself than even by showing your *pluck* to *pigeons* at *Fulham*.

"Thine truly,

"Ace-Deuce."

The enclosure presented a curious contrast to the preceding epistle: it read like the effusion of what certain old women of both sexes would denominate a very good, moral, and decidedly serious young man. Ecce signum.

"My Dearest Cousin,

"My heart bleeds to picture the distressing agony that will rend yours on receipt of this painful letter. I have nothing but cruel tidings to communicate, so cruel that I doubt while I write whether I live in a civilized country. Alas! all my worst fears are realized, and even the wildest chimeras of doubt and terror have become real demons howling for your destruction. Within this very hour, twelve men, or I should rather call them fiends in human shape, have outraged nature by pronouncing you 'Guilty of Murder,' the unprovoked, premeditated murder of the best of brothers. One would expect the common feelings of our kind would come unwillingly to such a degrading conclusion, but so easily and perversely are our weak frail judgments led astray, and so universally is the clamour raised against you for your blood, that I do not believe upon my sacred honour that twelve men could be found throughout the whole country to reverse the unjust sentence. Your abiding a formal trial is, therefore, out of the question. But worse remains to be told. I would some other pen than my own were charged with such an infliction, but even my affection for you imperiously demands that you should honestly know the truth and the whole extent of your danger. I fear to assure you that I who was present, and eye-witness of our heart-rending catastrophe, and consequently the best judge, have never ceased to lift up my voice in your behalf, as the author of a deplorable but truly accidental calamity; I say I fear that to tell you this will be but a small alleviation of the afflicting and almost incredible fact, that of all connected with you by ties of blood or affection, I stand almost if not altogether alone in this favourable opinion.

"Your father even has suffered his usual excellent judgment to be warped by the examples of his friends, if they may be called so, who are so much your foes. Mr. Rivers is inexorable; he has signed warrants, and despatched runners after you, but you know his Brutus, or rather brutal propensity to what he miscalls public justice. The Squire is actually outrageous; to convey an idea of it, I must borrow the simile of the tigress robbed of her whelp,—he swears, and I believe him, that he could take your life with his own hands. As for your aunt, she is wavering, but I could wish, for the sake of the sex, there had been another more steadfast in her first faith. Summon up, my dear Raby, all your resolution, all your fortitude, all your pride; you must forget her, who is unworthy of so sincere a passion as must emanate from a nature like yours. The fickleness of woman is proverbial, but till now I thought it was a fable.

"The All-wise Dispenser, who never sends pleasure unalloyed, as seldom inflicts pain without mitigation; and this loss will alleviate the bitter regret you would otherwise have suffered in leaving your own country. My parting words to you were too prophetical: you must leave England, perhaps for years, till this wolfish rage for your blood is appeased, and the popular mania has been cured, or at least subdued. But this will be a work of time —lose none, in the mean while, I implore you,—I shudder to think of the consequences of your being taken during this feverish delirium. My pen refuses to paint the objects that belong to the horrible picture of your public execution, for it would be not merely a legal murder, but a massacre in which neither young nor old would be spared. You must place the ocean between yourself and such a catastrophe; but consult my good friend Woodley, there is not a better or abler adviser in existence, and for honour really chivalrous, generosity truly romantic, and a sensibility rivalling female tenderness, he is a unique specimen of what man ought to be, rather

than what he is. I need not say confide in him, he will direct your course and furnish the means if required. Do not write here, for thereby you would be traced; enclose all your letters to Woodley, and he will forward them to me; I will personally take charge of their delivery to the right persons, and I shall urge your interests with all the zeal and constancy that a warm sympathy with your unhappy situation can inspire. In happier days, He who searches all hearts may see fit to turn them toward you, and restore the tide of natural affection to its proper channel. Remember this, and you will not go comfortless; but fly instantly for life, and to escape infamy worse than death. It is hard to cry thus with a heart that yearns to you, for believe me, my dear Raby, all former unkind passages between us are forgotten in your afflicting visitation, or remembered only to my own reproach. Religion will, of course, be your comfort, as it is mine; and that He who redeemed Israel out of captivity, may rescue my dear Raby from the house of bondage, and restore him to our arms in his due time, shall be the constant prayer of your faithful and loving cousin,

WALTER TYRREL.

"P. S. Trust no reports of the newspapers -- the most extravagant rumours are in circulation. Take care of your health. If you think of the Indies, I should say the West, rather than the East; but consult Woodley."

"There," he said, as he threw down the pen, "I think Marguerite herself could not have schemed better. I consider him as fairly shipped as if I saw the invoice -- 'One Raby Tyrrel,— marked C. A. I. N., from London direct, to nobody knows whither, and consigned, nobody cares to whom.'"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Here I and sorrow sit.

KING JOHN.

I never heard
Of any true affection but 't was nipt
With care, that like the caterpillar, eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest book, the rose

MIDDLETON.

She loved him with the disinterested fervour of a woman's love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune; when disgrace and danger darkened around his name,— she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings.

THE SKETCH BOOK.

IT was not without some anxiety that the Justice returned to Hawksley, to communicate the result of the inquest to one upon whom the tidings might have an almost fatal effect. In spite of his own theory of love, the words of Mrs. Hamilton had made some impression on his mind; and although, Brutus-like, he was ready to deliver the only son of his friend to the executioner, he was not quite prepared to plunge a knife into the bosom of his own daughter, without having the fatherly motive of Virginius. The state in which he found her confirmed these misgivings.

If you look over head, on a clear bright summer's day, you will see the zenith of a beautiful and intense blue; but towards the horizon, the sky grows gradually paler and paler, as if heaven itself became dull and tarnished by intercourse with the earth. Even thus, the pure perfect azure of

love and bliss, which is only to be looked for above, fades away more and still more as it mingles with that moral atmosphere of tears and grosser exhalations which encircles this nether world, till but a faint tinge of the celestial colour at last communes with the distant trees, the mountainous outline, or the ocean level. To this dull gray tint, the blue eyes of Grace seemed to have wept themselves, as she turned them with a look of inquiry on her father, notwithstanding that their hue was advantaged by the pale complexion of her cheeks, which had lost all their life-like bloom. The lids drooped heavily over the languid orbs, and the fine arches of her eyebrows were broken and depressed, as if by the weighty cares and sorrows that dwelt above them. She had a book in her lap, over which her emaciated body bent with the languor of dejection and exhaustion; her arms hung listlessly by her side without motion even in one long attenuated finger; her very hair had uncurled itself, and instead of the glossy auburn undulations, whereon the sun used to glance goldenly as in the ripples of a brook, the long straight tresses hung from her marble brow and clung to her white neck and shoulders, as passively as the dark brown sea-weed on a mass of chalk.

Even the stern bosom of the magistrate was touched by the sight of his sole beloved daughter, in such a melancholy condition, though his relenting was but as the gradual giving of a hard frost, when the ice changes, indeed, from a solid to a fluid, but remains almost as cold as before. Unlike those sympathetic natures which receive and transmit kindly impulses with the rapid intensity of the electric spark, he was formed of some non-conducting materials that reluctantly imbibed and slowly communicated the genial warmth of the affections. With a heart resembling the asbestos in fibre, he could not conceive how another of different texture could consume in the fabulous flames of a passion that had made no such scorching impression upon himself; and consequently, although the altered appearance of Grace excited both tenderness and alarm, these feelings were greatly neutralized by his impression that the case was one which chiefly called for medical interference.

"My dear child," he said, at the same time taking her hand and examining her face with something of the grave professional air of Old Formality, "you look pale, you are unwell."

"It's nothing," answered Grace, impatiently—"at least, nothing *now*. Tell me——"

"Another time, Grace," said the Justice, with a motion of his hand, that implied a waiving of the subject,—"another time. We will talk of nothing to-day that may shock your nerves. Keep yourself quiet—go to bed early—and to-morrow you will rise, I hope, as well as ever. If not, we will hear what Dr. Bellamy has to recommend—a visit to the sea-side, perhaps, and a change of scene."

"It must be a greater change, that can do me good," answered Grace, in a tone as strange as solemn. "A change of which I have no hope."

"A change beyond hope!"—said the father, with a look of the most unaffected surprise. "Either, my dear child, you underrate my affection or my ability; but if even a temporary sojourn, or a permanent residence at Madeira——"

"It concerns not time or place," answered Grace, hastily, "or eternity and the grave would be the true remedy. The change I speak of means an alteration in your own modes of feeling, your own modes of thinking,—there lies my grief, and one which my heart tells me is incurable."

"My modes of thinking and feeling!" exclaimed the magistrate—"do I not love you more than my own life?"

"And do I not love Raby," asked the daughter, eagerly—"do I not love Raby Tyrrell more than mine? If you care for me, you should care for him. Can you fell the tree, without destroying the ivy that clings to

it? Let us fall — let us fall together — but not by the hands of my own father!" and the poor girl pressed her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out the images she had conjured up.

"My dearest Grace," said the Justice, losing a fraction of his equanimity, "who talks of cutting him off? — he is not even in custody."

"No," said Grace, removing her hands from her eyes, and fixing her gaze on the opposite side of the apartment, whilst she spoke deliberately and with frequent pauses, as if interpreting a threatening hand-writing on the wall. "No — but the hour will come. I ask not to know the cruel verdict — I see it before me in letters of blood — and the name of my own father ratifies the sentence. Oh God! oh God! the picture is no picture. The horrors of my girlhood, the very dream of my childhood, have all come to pass! That awful figure, that pitiless parent, steps out of the canvass, and, with a remorseless hand, drags me —"

"Grace!" said the father, rather more hastily than his wont, for his tongue had, generally, the stately pace of a managed horse, "the physicians had, I thought, cured these delusions. For myself, if my performance at all resembles the model you allude to, it should command your reverence. There is but one who can know and appreciate the pangs I suffer in conscientiously acting as one of the viceroys of the Divine Justice. Possibly, the culprit who is turned off at the gallows feels less pain in dying than the sheriff who presides at the execution; but what is the amount of their united pangs to the aggregate sufferings of society, provided there were neither culprit nor sheriff? The many must not suffer for the few. By divine enactment all men are brethren, and if a fratricide kills one of my brothers, for the sake of the rest ——"

"He is found guilty then?" interrupted Grace, speaking hurriedly, in a tone that scarcely amounted, with all its energy, to a whisper.

"The law of God must be kept inviolate," — said the magistrate, reenforcing his resolution by a text from the Bible. "'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:' that is the scriptural statute — and I have signed his warrant."

"And mine too," exclaimed Grace, rising up, "and may it be forgiven you when we all come to judgment!"

"So be it," said the Justice, quietly, "that is the highest court of appeal."

For a minute, Grace gazed eagerly at the speaker, as if to discover whether this composure was real or assumed, but the only symptom of agitation she could detect, on the minutest scrutiny, was an almost imperceptible contraction and dilatation of the pupil of the eye, a symptom of nervousness, be it noted, which the late Sir Thomas Lawrence observed in every one of his numerous sitters, male or female, with the sole exception of John Kemble. Slight, however, as the sign was, it inspired Grace with a proportionate degree of hope, and with a more composed demeanour and voice, she recommended the volume that had been lying on her knees to her parent's perusal.

"My dear father," she said, as she held out the book to him, "this is no time for girlish secrets: read these pages; they are the faithful records of a heart and mind of rare excellence. Every line breathes peace and gentleness; an ardent love of nature, and such a tenderness towards the meanest of her creatures," — here she sighed heavily — "as he is not likely to meet with himself."

The Justice took the book that was offered to him, and a faint smile of pity accompanied his discovery that it was a volume of manuscript poetry. The total inefficacy of such evidence in a court of justice, was, no doubt, present to his mind; he condescended, however, to glance over a few lines, which, like some of Cowper's, expressed a strong abhorrence of destroying even an insect; but the sentiment only elicited the disparaging remark :—

"He is not quite a Nero: —he does n't like killing flies."

"No, he never took Roman tyrants for models," retorted Grace, provoked beyond filial patience by the cruel allusion to her unfortunate lover.

Her eye rekindled, and her cheek flushed so vividly, that she seemed to have become another person. Like an exhausted body repaired in energy and animation by the transfusion of blood from a more vigorous subject, the intermixture of the vital interests of Raby with her own imparted to her fresh spirits and strength: her heart rallied, her veins glowed, her nerves were restrung, her mind aroused, and, instead of the passive self abandonment of grief, her feelings took the heroical tone of one prepared to act as well as suffer, on behalf of a life and fame dear to her as her own. In the mean time, her undutiful reply excited the utmost astonishment and anger in her father, to whose ear it sounded like mere blasphemy. He bent on her his severest frown, whilst he addressed her in a tone that implied at once the extremes of amazement, indignation, and reprehension.

"Grace!"

"I am deeply sorry," replied the offending daughter, "for my irreverence, though my injustice was extorted by your own. But you know him not as I do; you cannot — you do not."

"And will not," said the magistrate, in a tone intended to convey that the decision was beyond appeal. "Roman and tyrannical as you please, I fervently thank my Maker, that, in his infinite wisdom, he did not frame me for my appointed judicial duties with a heart so flexible, a judgment so infirm, a capacity so limited, and a temper so vacillating, as to be influenced by such idle stuff as this;" and, with the conclusion of the sentence, he sent the devoted volume whirling across the room.

This indignity towards her treasured keepsake, now a thousand times the more valuable, as the last relic possibly of the writer, was beyond the owner's endurance. She started to her feet, and, with outstretched arms and flashing eyes, addressed her father in a voice that seemed to tremble at its own unusual vehemence.

"End not there," she said, "end not there! Cast me from you as well as my book. Reject me, and all that belongs to me. Henceforth, you have no child, and I no father. From this hour I renounce all obedience,——"

"Grace!" exclaimed the astounded magistrate, with as much horror as if the whole three kingdoms had revolted against the ruling powers, whereof he was a fraction; "have I lived to see this day!"

"There are worse in store," answered Grace, less vehemently, but with equal determination, "worse for us both. You have taught me my duty — that the claims of everlasting justice are superior to the natural ties between parent and child. Be inexorable in your course, and so will I, — though they diverge so that we must part for ever."

"And what is the disobedient path," asked the stern Justice, "that your rebellious fancy suggests to you?"

"A plain one," said Grace, with the calmness that belongs to a resolved spirit. "You call for justice on Raby Tyrrel, and so do I. Let your cruel verdict find its mark. Load him with chains, brand him with crime and infamy, let the whole world desert him, but one heart shall not fall away from him! We were affianced before heaven! I was his in love and joy, and I will be his in love and sorrow. Let him hold up his attainted hand, he shall have this," — here she held out her own, "in exchange for it. I will vouch for his innocence at the altar, — yes, I will marry him, — though it be as the gipsy woman foretold me, — the wedding myself to a phantom, a skeleton!"

"You are mad, Grace," said the father, with a grave shake of the head,

as if doubtful whether the words might not bear a literal application to her state of mind.

"Oh that I were?" answered Grace, fervently clasping her hands, "that this frightful controversy were nothing but delusion, and the unrelenting parent only a harsh keeper. My reason may fail, but as yet it is unsettled."

"Then it should have reprobated this childish and sinful wilfulness," said the magistrate, with all his austerity. "I presumed nothing short of insanity could make a young female of ordinary modesty and timidity thus fly in the face of her own father! Nothing short of lunacy could persuade her to lift up her voice against that of a whole country, and set up her own judgment in opposition to the community; but nothing less than the crisis of outrageous phrensy could inspire her with the notion of marrying a felon."

"He is none!" exclaimed Grace, fervently.

"A judge and a jury must decide that question," said the magistrate. "He will have a fair trial."

"A foul mockery," replied Grace, "a compound maybe of sordid timidity, gross ignorance, rash passion, and vulgar prejudice. But who can try him like me? Who can judge him as I can?—It is for her who held his heart in her hand, who knew every secret of his soul to say 'Guilty or not guilty?' Try him! convict him—sentence him! but I will cry, 'Innocent, innocent,' till my last breath. One voice shall speak for him—one hand shall be held out to him! Brand him felon—I will be a felon's wife. The same chaplain that reads the condemned ——"

She stopped abruptly. The father started as he saw her drop into a chair with her hand pressed to her side. The hectic flush had entirely vanished, and her eyes had lost all their transient lustre; her own energy had exhausted her, and she was suffering under an acute spasm. Unluckily the judicial images she had conjured up, were directly inimical to her influence in her father's affections. The idea of a trial, which would attract the attention of the whole country, only suggested to him a signal opportunity for the display of a stoical virtue unbiassed by the claims of ancient friendship, and unshaken even by the pleadings of filial affection: in short, he was mounted on that hobby, with which he was to trample as inexorably on humanity as the rider of the Pale Horse in the Revelation.

Accordingly he had screwed up his nerves to the task; he knit his brows, set his teeth, and compressed his lips; whilst his hands were rigidly clenched, and every muscle stiffened with stern determination. He resolved to be stone—nay, *that* wears away with the dropping of water—he intended to be marble, granite—to become as it were his own statue, and perpetuate himself as the very last of the Romans: but he mistook the material. The block had a soft vein at the core that was fatal to his workmanship; and the stern figure he had been chiselling fell asunder in fragments. At the sight of his sole beloved daughter, apparently rapidly withering from life into death, his heart relented not with the gradual melting of a common thaw, but with violence and a common crash of an iceberg detaching itself from an arctic region, whence, by an irresistible current, it was separated for ever.

"Grace," he said, with a voice singularly altered in one brief moment, "I knew you had as fond a father, but I thought you had a firmer. The battle is over, and victory is on your side—a decisive one, for I shall never strive again on the same field. I feel I am no Brutus. I was born too late to belong to the Romans—in these degenerate days we are as incapable of supporting their cool impenetrable integrity, as their armour?"

A deep sigh accompanied this confession, an agonizing one for a man of the Justice's temperature, for unlike those other enthusiasts the alchymists who struggled on hopefully from failure to failure, his first defeat was ne-

cessarily his last. It should create a more charitable feeling in this world than is extant, to reflect, that whilst the erring theories of infidels are adopted occasionally with every appearance of sincerity, ingenuousness, and disinterestedness, the sublimer doctrines of Christianity are paraded by professors commensurately and palpably hollow, hypocritical, and time-serving. The essential difference between an enthusiast and a canter, lies in their sincerity; the feelings and sentiments of the first, however exaggerated, demand our reverence; of the latter, our supremest indignation and contempt. On entering a lunatic asylum, the mistaken views of its inmates, who do not see exactly as we do, excite our commiseration; but on the outside of that dungeon, in the broad sunshine of liberty, we pursue a wandering fancy like a mad dog, or rather a dog that has got an ill name, and it is persecuted without any allowance or mercy. Nevertheless such stray opinions are sometimes adopted with much of heroism and a chivalrous devotion; adverse feelings are sacrificed, obvious interests are neglected, and certain penalties are incurred. On this principle, a degree of sympathy may justly be claimed in behalf of the magistrate, whose life-long scheme of reputation had been suddenly reversed. His aim had not been grovelling; his motive was not ignoble; he had aspired upwards, but like Dedalus with his waxen wings, his flight had been frustrated at its highest pitch by an unexpected but natural warmth. He dropped at once from his "pride of place," and the shock was terrible. His balloon had burst like a soap-bubble; and instead of soaring above the heads of his fellows, he was standing on the common level of mankind. But he had been honest in his views. Stern in his love of abstract justice, he had always administered it with rigid impartiality; and he did not now cede to his daughter without weighty scruples at the idea of swerving from his usual unity and integrity of purpose.

"If I understand you, Grace," he said, "you desire that on this unhappy occasion, your father should for the first time relax that vigilance and zeal for the interests of the public, which, as the bounden duty of an upright and conscientious magistrate, he has hitherto exerted in the discharge of his duty?"

"I do indeed beseech you," answered Grace, "to stand neuter in these dreadful proceedings. For your own sake, I would not have you share in a persecution that must be bitterly repented hereafter."

"Then there is but one course," said the Justice, solemnly; "and I hope, Grace, you will give my love credit for the sacrifice. From this date I resign. I am no longer in the commission."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Grace, fervently, with an involuntary gesture of thanksgiving, conveying but an indifferent parting compliment to a retiring Justice, certainly the most active and zealous that ever sat on the bench. But it had always been one of the first wishes of her heart, though she had never dared to express it, that her father should quit the magistracy, and such an unexpected declaration of an event beyond her hope, betrayed her into an inadvertence. The shade that passed over her parent's countenance, warned her of her error; and she hastened to throw herself into his arms with such earnest expressions of gratitude and affection, that for the moment the Ex-Justice felt that the preservation of the public peace had been well exchanged for the fostering of private tranquillity. "C'est le premier pas qui coûte" — having once given ground, he relented still farther, and allowed himself to be partly converted by Grace's arguments in favour of the unfortunate Raby.

"I will at least suspend my judgment," he said, "and remand the subject till we have farther depositions. But I am talking as if I were still a Justice," he added, with one of his grimmest smiles — which was immediately followed by a sigh.

"My dearest father," began Grace.

"Say no more," said her father, kindly, "you look ill, and I can estimate your struggle by my own. Compose yourself, and let us mutually hope the best. Let the reproach of murder be satisfactorily removed, and since Ringwood is gone, now I am at my confessions, I would sooner bestow you on the son of my oldest and dearest friend, Sir Mark Tyrrel, than any one I know. Let this idea console you, but not mislead and delude you with too sanguine anticipations — the result must depend on the gist of the evidence, that will prove the animus — so we *used* to call it All turns upon that. Remember, I pledge myself to no opinion; he may be innocent, or he may be guilty! and I must warn you, that in the latter case I would not even affix my signature to a petition, interfering with the extreme penalty of the law. On the other hand, let him be cleared by the voice of a jury of his countrymen, and I may be induced to sanction your attachment, provided always, that it be accompanied by a due deference to, and recognition of, the vested rights of parental authority."

During the preceding speech, the colour of Grace alternately went and came, and she thrilled and trembled by turns, according to the tenor of each sentence. The allusion to an ignominious death made her shudder, but the welcome promise in the conclusion produced a shower of tears. Her heart was too full to speak, but she eagerly seized and kissed the hand of her father, as he restored to her the precious volume he had before hurled away from him, an act which imported more kindness than even his words. He affectionately embraced her in return, and thenceforward they enjoyed a communion of love and confidence more perfect than they had ever before experienced.

"I did not expect my career to end thus, said the Justice to himself, as he retired to his study to meditate on what had passed; "I thought I had more nerve, more firmness, more decision of character. I was miserably deceived: perhaps, if I had had a son to deal with it might have proved otherwise." Here he ventured to glance at his favourite picture, where, in truth, the sons of the Roman stoic stood prominently in the fore-ground, with swaggering attitudes and hardened defying faces, as if each was uttering the undutiful boast of the Kentuckian, "My father can lick any body, and I can lick *him*."

"But in a daughter," continued the magistrate, "there is such tenderness, such softness, she seems so fragile a being, and withal so affectionate, that the hardest heart must be touched to tears, like the rock in Horeb. However, my trial is past; I have given way; and my official functions are at an end. Conscience will not allow me to continue in them after such a manifest proof of my infirmity. How can he presume to judge others, who judged so mistakenly of himself?"

Well would it be for the world if every censor in it would adopt his concluding sentiment. Men are too prone to view their own errors and failings with indulgence, whilst they visit those of others with unsparing reprehension. Every one seems turning as it were God's evidence against his neighbour, as if by impeaching his fellows he was exonerating himself from the penalty. The worst constructions are but upon dubious motives, malicious meanings are extracted from careless expressions, the scratch of a stray jest is taken as a deliberate wound; in short, if the multitude of our sins depend upon charity for a covering, the fabric is so scarce that the poor peccadilloes cannot have a suit a-piece, unless such a one as belonged to the decayed Spanish gentleman, which was all slashes. On the other hand, should the tide turn, the kindly impression is communicated so reluctantly, and adopted so tardily, that the charitable impulse comes commonly too late to be of service to its object. It is generally difficult, besides, to make the amends proportionate to the injury; indeed, in some cases it is

impracticable, as was well illustrated by the remonstrance of a foreigner to a gentleman who had horsewhipped him by mistake. "Sare, you apologize at me, you shake hands to me, you beg pardon from me, but can you *unstrike* me?"

An occurrence in the ensuing chapter will serve to develop this moral.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like the standing pool,
And do a wilful stillness entertain
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark."

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer,
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme:
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

MILTON.

THE flood rapidly subsided, but left behind many tokens of the extent of its ravages: amongst others, as already recorded, was the destruction of the little bridge between Hawksley and the Hall, a circumstance productive of some embarrassment to an unsuspecting pedestrian, who had expected the assistance of the ruined fabric in passing over the brook.

"Humph! a regular pull-up, right on my haunches," exclaimed the man, as he came to a full stop on the bank. It has never yet been explained by phrenologists why men should scratch their heads when puzzled, but it is certain that no sooner did this difficulty present itself to the wayfarer, than his hat was off in one hand, while the fingers of the other hunted through his short yellow scrubby hair, like a team of spaniels in a field of stubble. At the same moment he fixed his eyes on the stream, and with all his might began to ponder what substitute could be found for a bridge, a deliberation to which Lavater would have assigned a very distant termination, for of all countenances ever created, that of Master Goff, one of the country constables, had the least expression of sagacity or intelligence. It was certainly no superabundance of brain in the interior that made his two heavy eyes with their lids protrude from their sockets like two well-poached eggs, except that in place of the yelks there were two globes of the dull greenish brown of a fowl's gizzard; his nose was absolutely devoid of character or meaning, a mere mushroom-button; while his mouth, round and open, reminded one irresistibly of a silly fish making itself upto take a minnow. Fonder as intensely as he liked, with such a face he could only appear to be going to sleep with his eyes open. To those who are not familiar with the workings of our admirable constitution, it may seem strange that justice should be provided with such a doltish auxiliary, forgetting that, from the days of mythology, she has been notorious for playing at blindman's buff; at which game, with a fillet before her eyes, she must take the first she can lay her hands on, from a Chief Justice downwards. Thus the sapient Peter Goff had been thrown in her way when she was groping about in the dark for a constable, an injudicious mode of selection, by the way, almost equal to pricking for sheriffs with the eyes wide open. At last the cogitator's mind produced its fruit; but like most of his thoughts it resembled a

Michaelmas peach, which takes a weary time in ripening, and is worthless after all.

"Well, I can do as much as most men, but I can't go over a bridge if there is n't none."

After such a specimen of his conclusions it will sound preposterous, but it is true, that this straggler behind the march of intellect was in his own conceit a grenadier striding at its head; but there are no bounds to human vanity, it is one of those features which it is impossible to caricature. Many a man, as well as maiden, mistakes his forte, and strums upon it with as much self-complacency as an acknowledged proficient. The favourite theme of Goff's sonatas was his own astuteness, or, as he termed it, cuteness, in token whereof many a nod of his chuckle head, many a wink of his dull eye, and many an application of his fore-finger to the side of his insignificant nose, hinted at superior shrewdness, whilst his common-place remarks were enforced by an emphatic thump of his club stick upon the ground. This assumption made him particularly jealous of any attempt to bestow information upon him, which was always met by one of his oracular signs of intelligence. He affected a foreknowledge of every thing, and as a natural consequence knew little or nothing; so that as was sarcastically said of him, in reference to his pursuits, "he could hunt a criminal at sight like a turnspit, or pick out the scent like a greyhound," a saying the slow-witted constable construed for the first five minutes into a compliment. As usual, this functionary had a satellite, who, unlike the celestial ones, was considerably brighter than his principal; he was really a sharp active fellow, as superior in sense and sagacity to his master as a well-trained pointer is frequently to the biped in fustian who plods behind his heels.

"I say, master," cried the follower, as he came up, "here's a pretty obstacle."

"It used to be," answered the other, with a sort of chuckle, "but now it's no part of the prospect."

"It will give Greggy the start, though," answered the man, commonly called Tippy, with some reference probably to his acceptance of an occasional bribe.

"Greggy be hanged," said the constable; "he may do some of your slow ones, but he's no match for me," and thump went the stick.

"But here we are on the wrong side of the water," said Tippy, "Nick Ferrers told me that Squire Raby ——"

"Thank ye for nothing," interrupted the constable, with a wink; "I knew it long afore Nick Ferrers."

"He's a shy cock," said Tippy, "but he'll try his old haunts, most likely: I'll lay a gallon Miss Rivers knows where."

"To be sure," answered the constable, with a wise nod; "say I told you so. I'll tell you what, Tippy, he'll be somewhere's about his old haunts."

"I wonder if this water's fordable," said Tippy, with a look of appeal towards his companion.

"If any body knows, I ought," said the constable, pompously, "I've lived in the parish these forty years, man and boy."

"Where's the ford, then?"

"Never mind that, Tippy; we won't wet our feet, we'll go round by the road."

"Why, to be sure, if *we* can't cross the water, *he* can't, and so the road will be the likely place to fall in with him."

"Just what I meant, man," said the constable, with a wink; "but you 're dull, Tippy — it's a dull day with you," and the oracle gave a grave shake of his head.

"Perhaps if you was to go by the road," suggested Tippy, "and I was to wade across the water ——"

"To be sure," said the constable; "it's what I've been driving at all along, but you do n't take — ain't I a regular deep one — eh, Tippy? let me alone for a scheme — he's grabbed as sure as I stand here," and his stick again tested the solidity of the terra firma. "He's limed, Tippy — he's trapped — mark my words, he is — and, in that case, he's as good as caught."

The follower made no answer, but proceeded along the bank, looking out for a shallow part of the brook where he might wade over, and he had gone about twenty paces when he suddenly stopped, and bending down over the stream gazed intently into the water. At last, having satisfied himself of the nature of the object, he turned round and hallooed to the constable to come to the spot. Accordingly, with due deliberation, for Master Goff moved bodily as well as mentally as slowly as a tortoise, he arrived at the place, where, stooping down as the other had done, he stared at the water, but without perceiving any thing except the mere element with his own stolid countenance reflected on the surface.

"Do you see any thing?" asked Tippy.

"To be sure I do. I have eyes in my head," and he winked at his own image.

"It's the flap of a man's coat," said Tippy, in an under tone.

"I know it," answered the constable, telling one of his habitual lies, "it's a bottle-green one, with gilt buttons."

Unluckily for the speaker's assertion, a strong eddy of the current brought the skirt gradually towards the surface, proving obviously that it was a black one. It would, probably, have sunk down again before the constable had thought of the propriety of catching hold of it, had not Tippy threw himself on the ground and seized the cloth.

"By the weight," said the latter, "there's a body to it."

"That's just what I expected," said the constable, "and between you and me, I have a notion who it is."

"Who?" asked Tippy.

"That's tellings," returned the constable, "some folks see far'her than other folks," — a nod and a wink at once. "You 'll see when he's pulled out."

"Lend a hand, then," said Tippy; and with some difficulty, they raised the body, and deposited it on the grass, by the side of the brook.

"Poor fellow!" ejaculated Tippy, after a long look at the corpse, "what shall we do with him?"

"Stand him on his head, to be sure," said the constable, "to run the water out — that's the most reviving thing."

"It might have revived him two or three days ago," said Tippy.

"Ay, three days, or three and a half — that's just my own calculation," said the constable; "any body may see that by his appearance — he's monstrous swelled, sure-*ly*——"

"Is it the man you mean?" inquired Tippy.

The constable nodded, "It's him, Tippy, and no mistake."

"For my part," said Tippy, "his face is so swelled, and bruised, and battered, I should n't know him if he was my own born brother."

"Nobody said you could," answered Master Goff; "some folks are slow at guess work, but others ain't. I know what I knows."

"What's that?" asked Tippy.

"No matter — that's neither here nor there," answered the constable, with a succession of important little nods. "I 'll tell you what, Tippy, it's lucky I 'm here — two heads is better than one."

"Had n't we better search his pockets?" asked the sub, obsequiously willing to humour the foible of his superior, a course of conduct which he anticipated would lead to Goff's standing treat at the next public-house.

"The very thing I was a going to propose," answered the constable, "it you had not seconded my motion."

The sub did not reply, but proceeded to examine the pockets of the deceased, giving a verbal inventory of the articles as he proceeded —

"Here's — no, there's nothin whatever in his leathers — yes there is, though — two bullets: left coat flap — a little book in print — called the Fiery Queen — right flap, a white cambric handkerchief marked — P. T.; right hand waistcoat — a guinea — and a dollar, and a sixpence: left hand — a silver pencil case — a little key — name on the pencil case — Raby Tyrrel ——"

"You do n't say so!" exclaimed the constable, snatching the implement from the other's hand, and poring at it long enough to have deciphered a Chaldee inscription. "Then all I can say is, there never was a worse day's work."

"For poor Sir Mark — God help him!" said the sub, whose calling had not yet blunted all his better feelings.

"That's very true; — but you do n't take, mun, you do n't take," said the constable; "you do n't look at consequences as I do — you've no cuteness. What I meant were this. You must sympathize with yourself."

"As how, master?"

"Ay, I knew you would ask me that!" said the Solomon, drawing himself up, preparatory to giving his companion what he called a furbishing. "As I said afore, you never foresee nothing till it 's come to pass. That ain't *my* way. But there's as much difference atween men as between calves and kittens — one's born with his eyes open and t' other ain't. I won't name names — it ain't your fault, it 's your natur; but though I say it as should n't say it, I 'm quite the reverse. For my part, I roominate," — here he fixed his dull eyes in a stare upon vacancy. "I preponderate," — he put his forefinger to his forehead, — "and that's how I penetrate. For example, here's my thought at this present. A dead man is n't a 'live un."

"That's undisputable," said the sub.

"Secondly. Drowning is n't hanging."

"That's gospel," said the sub.

"Thirdly. If there's no trial; there can't be no conviction."

"I 'll take my davit on it," said the sub, again.

"That's logic, then; that's what I call knock-me-down," said the constable, with a triumphant stumping of his stick. "There you have it; now you've got my meaning as plain as a pikestaff, Tippy."

"I think I can guess," answered the sub. "You mean the reward; and sure enough, there's all our yellowboys ringing as bad as dumps."

"My very words, if you 'd give one time," said the constable. "If you ask my opinion, we 're had. We're done, Tippy; it's a bite. There 's amen to forty pound, that was as cocksure as if I had it here," — and he slapped his pocket.

"And what 's to be done with the guinea and the sixpence?" inquired the understraper.

"And the dollar, Tippy?" added the constable, with a nod and a wink. "Why, we must keep 'em as a dividend, like. But mum for that."

"Or somebody will be crying snacks," said the sub. "Yonder 's the keeper."

"Just what I expected," said the constable, with a nod. "Hark, ye, Tip, do n't you put in a syllable. Leave me to deal with him. He's a deep un, you 'd be pump'd dry in a minute. It requires 'cuteness — I 'll be as sly as a fox — trust me for that; if I do n't hold my own with him, my name's not Goff."

"Suppose I put the book and the handkerchief back again," suggested the sub; "and let the keeper find 'em himself?"

"I was coming to that by and by. Not amiss for you, though," said the constable, with a patronizing air. So saying, he stooped down and replaced the article he had taken into his own possession, in the pocket of the deceased, while the sub replaced the book and handkerchief. The keeper came up shortly afterwards.

"Bless my heart, masters — here's a pitiful sight!"

"You're correct so far," said the constable, nodding, and folding his arms by way of making himself up for a furbishing. "Do you know who he is?"

"Not an idea on it," answered Mat. "His face have been sadly mauled by the water varmint? and he be all swelled and bruised. Do you know him yourself?"

"Don't I!" said Goff, smiling, and throwing a knowing wink at his assistant. "I smoked him at the first sight. But it's my office to sniff out people, felons and so forth; and it's your's only to find out game. I'm reckoned a bit of a dab at it, too, ain't I, Tippy?" — to which Tippy assented with a nod.

"Hold up, then," said the keeper, "and let's see your point."

"Yes, yes," said the constable, "when you're in the dark, you all come to *me* to strike a light. I'll hold a gallon o' beer you don't name him in three tries."

"No, no — it's an unproper subject for betting on," said Old Mat, with a pious feeling towards the dead, that accorded with his character. "But I'll guess, however. Mayhaps it's George the saddler, and a bit of a poacher besides, to give un his due: folks do say he's a-missing since the flood."

"Guess again."

"Mayhap, then, it's young Tom the miller, for he's a-missing too?"

"Miles off — you never shot randomer," and the constable shook his head. "Now you shall hear mine. Any body can guess at hap-hazard; but preponderating, and roominating, and digressing is another thing. As for me, I always concur with myself, I call it comparing notes. I've my own reasons; but putting this and that together, if that's any body's body, it's the body of one as ought to have ended otherwise;" and the speaker clapped his hand with a significant gesture under his left ear.

"What, Master Raby!" exclaimed the game-keeper, and he took a long gaze at the body from head to heel. "It have a likely look enough. It's just the sort of trim for such as him to go a-shooting in, half sportsman and half schollard. Them cords and gaiters are well enough, but the silk waistcoat, and that jaunty black coat's any thing but the proper wear for our stiff covers."

"Say I told you so," said the constable, with a knowing wink. "The toggery was the first thing I twigged. But I went by many more things besides."

"You searched him, mayhap?" said the game-keeper.

"We were going to," said Tippy, when you came in sight.

"But, says I, do n't be precipitous," and the constable gave his fellower a reproving frown for his interference. "We'll have t' other witness, that's what I call prudence."

Old Mat, without answering, went down on his knees, and proceeded forthwith to satisfy himself of the truth by searching the pockets. "Here's one of his marks for certain," he said, as he held up his little volume of Spenser: the handkerchief corroborated the conjecture; but the pencil-case placed the identity beyond all doubt. The old forester immediately rose up, but he was unable, for a moment, to give his thoughts utterance.

"The wretched boy!" he said, at length; "so he have been sinfully driven, after all, to make away with himself. But I always said he could

never abide it — his days could never be lightsome agin, with such a guilty conscience. But he 's dead, and that pays all — it be a thousand pities though he ever turned up. I can't fret for him, like the young Squire, for it 's only a judgment come home to him ; but a father 's a father, and if Sir Mark have a whole string left in his heart, here is the sight as will break it!"

"All these reflections have been made afore," said Goff, with a wave of his hand, for he was jealous of this interference with his performance as first fiddle. "It 's time to act, that 's my principle ; talking do n't do like doing. When I 've preponderated, I 'll give you directions."

"I'll tell you what," said Mat, apparently musing, "it wo n't do to go right on end to the Hall with it. We 'll carry the body to my lodge, and there we can send after a shell, while somebody goes and breaks the news up at the house."

"Not a bad move," said the constable; "I had one to match. As for breaking it, that 's quite in my own line. I take it on myself. Some would come plump out with the truth; but that is n't my advice. For my part, I like to be mysterious, to be off and on, as the saying is. I warrant I 'll beat about the bush so, the Baronet sha' n't know what I 'm driving at, any more than the man in the moon."

"Fall to work, then," said the forester ; "we shall want a few boughs, and an armful or two of fern to strew over."

"Teach your grandmother!" exclaimed the self-sufficient constable, with a nod and a wink ; but he did not disdain, notwithstanding, to imitate practically every movement of the old gamekeeper, by whose exertions, principally, a rough litter was formed, similar to that which had been used for transporting the body of Ringwood. It was under a serener sky than in the former instance, that the bearers took up their melancholy burden ; as they progressed across the park, the deer sported around them, the hares chased each other in rings, the wood-pigeons wooed each other in the trees, and the squirrel gambolled along the path, even as they had been bidden, in a verse, by the gentle Raby, now of touching import, in reference to his own ungentle fate.

Each furr'd or feather'd creature!
Enjoy, with me, this earth,
Its life, its love, its mirth,
And die the death of nature!

As soon as the corpse had been deposited at the lodge, Master Goff repaired to the Hall, to communicate the dismal tidings. His important bearing, and the nature of his office, procured him easy access to the Baronet, whom he found sitting in the library, in eager expectation of receiving intelligence of his fugitive son. But this anxiety only retarded the disclosure: at every question the constable stopped and drew in his horns like a snail, so that the Baronet was fain to leave him with all his tediousness to his own course, which he pursued with characteristic absurdity. Unlike the admirable overture to Der Freyschutz, which, with dreadful note of preparation, forewarns the startled auditor of impending horrors, the constable's prelude did not contain one syllable anticipatory of the catastrophe it was intended to announce. He began by a truism, that it is the nature of water to drown people, and, in illustration, he detailed the loss of Mrs. Worrall's sow and pigs by an irruption of the late flood, from which he wandered into a dissertation upon the advantages of knowing how to swim, and then came the tragical story of a village Leander, concluding with an original process for "resuscitating the drowned." Such an exordium was little calculated to arm the hearer against a sentence which, like the electric "Tu Marcellus eris" of a greater orator, smote as suddenly as severely.

"There 's nothing more dangerous," said the obtuse reporter, "tnan to go over a bridge of a pitch dark night when it 's washed away, and to my mind that was the case with poor master Raby!"

The effect was such as to greatly minister to the conceit of the egotistical speaker. He mistook the stillness and silence of Sir Mark for composure and resignation, and lauded himself accordingly, for he attributed all this apparent calmness to his able and considerate manner of broaching this new misery. But he found himself egregriously deceived, when, after a long pause, the stunning result of so sudden a shock, the bereaved father rose suddenly up with the mien of a wounded lion, and addressed him with angry gesture, and a terrible voice, deep, hollow, and broken.

"Out of my sight! — vermin! out of my sight! you have mobbed him to death amongst ye! Do n't tell me of broken bridges — he was hunted and worried like a wild beast — and that made him rush to his Maker. You 've pulled him down, body and soul — body and soul — and the curse of old Mark Tyrrel light on every one, great and small, that had a hand in it!"

The terrified constable awaited no farther dismissal, but sprang through the door and retreated along the passage with a celerity that increased as he heard the footstep of the Baronet behind him: nor did he feel quite safe till he arrived in the kitchen amongst the domestics, whom he threw into consternation by declaring, in a breath, that Raby was drowned, and Sir Mark had gone raving mad on the spot. But the latter had no idea of pursuit; he ascended to the drawing-room, where the Squire was keeping his usual watch beside the dead body of Ringwood, which, under his direction, was now lying in a sort of state that had formerly been bestowed only on the heads of the Hall. For a minute or two, the father's presence was unnoticed; such visits had frequently passed over without a word on either side; but a vain attempt at articulation made the Squire look up at Sir Mark, who, with working features and labouring chest, still struggled for utterance, whilst his finger remained pointing at the corpse. By a violent effort, he at last mastered voice enough for a few syllables.

"There is — another coming."

A slight nod from the Squire intimated that he comprehended the announcement, which he received with less concern than surprise, for his feelings were more than ever absorbed and concentrated within the narrow space occupied by Ringwood's coffin; indeed every hour his exclusive affection seemed to become more intense as the day approached which was to separate him from even the mortal remains of his favourite. Under this influence, such tidings grated on his ear and excited his peculiar jealousy.

"Not *here*," he said, "better in another room ——"

"No," answered Sir Mark, and the fatherly impulse gave him temporary firmness, "they came of the same stock — they were brothers — there never *was* ill blood between them — and they shall lie side by side."

The picture the last words conveyed overcame the speaker's fortitude.

"Oh, Ned!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice, "two at once — two at once —" and the strong man bowed himself under his double affliction, and wept and sobbed like a little child. The Squire's heart was touched at the sight, but he offered no attempt at consolation, for he could find none in his own case. He merely averted his eye and fixed it on its old object, leaving the mourner to his sorrows without witness or restraint. The death of Raby claimed little of the Squire's sympathy, but it caused some curiosity, and after the first burst of parental grief had subsided, he inquired in his abrupt manner how the event had taken place.

"I fear, by his own act," answered Sir Mark, "the Almighty forgive him! — But he was cruelly beset — if he had been the wild boar they call

him he would have turned at bay; but he was more like a hare, poor fellow! —fearful and gentle — so he took to water and sunk."

A sudden cry, and a bustle overhead, intimated that the evil tidings had reached the ears of Mrs. Hamilton; a sound that was superseded by the long doleful wail of Tibbie Campbell. However unapt to imbibe or follow English notions and fashions, the warm-hearted Scotchwoman was keenly alive to those kindly feelings which belong to our common nature; and her adoption and domicile at Tylney Hall had begot almost a clannish attachment to the family and its fortunes. Besides her devotion to her mistress, she had learned to reverence Sir Mark, and to take pride in his two bonny sons; and in her coronach for the untimely fate of the hopes of the house of Tyrrel, there mingled some national notes which, perhaps, belonged in strictness to the race of MacCallum More.

The Creole, meanwhile, was abroad, engaged in earnest colloquy with his foster-mother, who had waylaid him in his ride. He had bared before her the whole secrets of his bosom — his hopes, his fears, his schemes, his wishes, his misgivings, and his scruples, the last of which Marguerite treated with ineffable contempt.

"He who fears to confront death," she said, "is unfit to live. You shudder at a little blood — you shrink at the extinction of a single life; and yet, at your uncle's bidding, you were to enter the army! Call it glory, — and your hand was prepared to slay, till it matched the scarlet of your coat — to rise from cornet to captain, from colonel to general, you would wade knee-deep in gore — but to become Sir Walter Tyrrel, with a revenue equal to raising regiments of your own, you object to a blow that is not even to come from your own hand! Should Raby return, Ringwood has been hated and Grace Rivers has been loved in vain. The stroke that removes him will only anticipate the law, it will be attributed to his own act — but I am wasting words, you shall be Sir Walter Tyrrel in spite of yourself. Perhaps, while I speak, there remains but one bar between my prophecy and its fulfilment!"

They parted as usual, Marguerite indulging in an unrequited embrace, and St. Kitts returned to the Hall to find the prediction of his foster-mother literally come to pass. The two brothers who had stood between him and the promised inheritance were turned to clay, and the father heart-broken, and doomed to death, grieved over them as they lay side by side in their coffins.

The second catastrophe was known as rapidly and universally as the first, and the public opinion underwent a remarkable change. Every harsh word was retracted, every rash judgment repented. All the courteous gracious kindliness of the gentle Raby, all his good actions and generous deeds, were charitably recalled, and instead of a monster he became a martyr. No one talked any longer of the atrocious fratricide, but all tongues were eloquent on the bereaved condition of Sir Mark Tyrrel, deprived accidentally of two such incomparable sons.

At Hawksley, as poor Grace had predicted, this remorseful reaction of feeling occasioned peculiar anguish. The inflexible Justice had relented, he had made an important sacrifice for the sake of his only beloved daughter, but it had been done too late. The surviving son of his oldest friend had sunk under a general persecution, of which he could not acquit himself, and in requital he saw his own child smitten with sudden decay, robbed of her youth, faded and withering

> ——————Like a palm,
> Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

Thus ended all speculation on the guilt or innocence of Raby Tyrrel. A fresh jury was hastily summoned as the case demanded, and the coroner

was again in requisition. The second Inquest occupied even less time than the first, and a verdict of "Found Drowned" was recorded, thereby avoiding the disgusting formulæ of four cross roads and a stake through the body, a custom which is happily now "more honoured in the breach than the observance." By this decision, the body was allowed to be deposited in the family vault, whither, on the morrow, the kindred corpses were conveyed, attended by an unusual concourse of persons of all ranks; and on the following Sunday, the funeral sermon was preached by Doctor Cobb, taking for his text, at the especial request of Sir Mark, the beautiful and affecting words of the lamentation of David, —

"Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve; give me not counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

There's nothing that I cast my eyes upon
But shows both rich and admirable; all the rooms
Are hung as if a princess were to dwell here;
The gardens, orchards, every thing so curious!
Is all that plate your own too?

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

THE funeral day was at an end, with all its gloomy mockeries and dreary vanities. The friends or professed friends of the family had all departed except the Squire, and Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, whose carriage was at the door: the two latter were screwing up their faces to the proper dolorous expression for a farewell when the Squire entered the room. He had his hat on, and the little black terrier was under his arm. He walked straight up to the Baronet, and addressed him in an under tone.

"Don't want Nip?"

"Take him," answered Sir Mark.

They shook hands silently and slowly, during which process Ned fixed his one eye intently on the altered face of his old friend.

"Hold up," he said, and, with these two syllables, he wheeled abruptly round and departed, without taking the least notice of any one else in the room.

It was now the Twiggs' turn, and they had evidently made up their minds to take a more elaborate leave than poor Ned's. The master of the Hive walked gravely up to Sir Mark, whilst the mistress applied herself to the sister.

"My dear, dear Mrs. Hamilton," she said, "you must rouse. Don't take on, pray don't; you mus'n't sit and mope — there's nothing worse for the spirits. You must employ your mind. I remember, when my own poor mother died I could n't find comfort in any thing till I took to polishing a mahogany table."

"She is quite right," said Twigg, to the brother, in the same serious affectionate tone. "My dear Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, don't encourage grieving with idleness. Activity's the thing; sitting with your hands before you won't do. You must bustle it off. Go through your accounts with your steward. Look after your property."

"You must jaunt about," said Mrs. Twigg to the lady, "and pay visits. Go among all your friends — I need n't name the Hive. Go every where — gad about — the more the better — and by and by you 'll pick up again. Disperse yourself as much as you can."

"You must hunt away," said Twigg, to the Baronet; "you mus' n't give up any of your sportings. They 'll help to work it off. If I was you, where I hunted one fox afore, I 'd hunt two or three at once. That 's the way, says you, to git rid of trouble."

"Living low," said Mrs. Twigg, "is quite a mistake — it always produces lowness. Appetite 's every thing; force yourself to eat; humour your stomach, — no matter how trifling. Get cook to toss you up every hour in the day, — a little and often."

"Take a glass extra," exhorted Twigg; "grief sometimes gives way to a little conviviality."

"Nobody can fret long upon nothing," continued Mrs. Twigg; "good porter is very supporting. Taking care of ourselves for our own sakes is a duty to others. If you catch yourself thinking of your two nevies — have a sweet-bread."

"You must forget every thing," said Twigg. "You 've lost both your sons in a very shocking way — and you've no heir of your own to your property. There 's three gone within a very few years — the Colonel, and Ringwood, and Raby — but you 'd be wrong in recalling; you must think of them, and picture them to yourself, just as if they had never been born."

"Take my advice," said Mrs. Twigg, "do n't pine, but have a good hearty cry — it 's the most relieving thing in the world next to a skreek. Carry salts about you to sniff at, and always have water handy in case your head 's inclined to swim."

The suffering patients listened to these various prescriptions in silence, with sighs and shakes of the head; but the officious couple now made an offer apiece which extorted immediate and earnest answers.

"There 's nothing worse," said Mrs. Twigg, "than solitude and loneliness, except its darkness. Burn a rushlight. But solitude 's bad too; you mus' n't keep yourself to yourself. You want somebody to stir you up. The more gossipy and rackety the better — family duties won't allow my own coming to stay with you, but there 's nothing of the sort to prevent 'Tilda — she 'll be a prop."

"Oh, no," answered Mrs. Hamilton, eagerly, "not for the world, you mus' n't think of it."

"Yes, you 'll feel a great change," said Twigg to the Baronet; "death makes gaps in families that can't be filled up; you 'll miss 'em sadly when it comes to being alone. It 's a black time o' the year for the business — and if my son, T., junior, would be society for a bit, let him come, says you — and he 's down by return of post."

"No, no, no," said the Baronet, decidedly; "I 'm obliged all the same, but Kate and I must comfort one another, the rest must come from above."

"True," answered Twigg, "religion will be a standing article, of course — and Him who tempers the lambs to the shorn sheep — I know what you mean, says you, though it 's not quite the words. God bless you, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," — and they shook hands.

"God bless you, my dear," echoed Mrs. Twigg, contriving by a little jump to kiss Mrs. Hamilton, "I 'll come and console as often as I can;" and the two comforters departed, perfectly persuaded that they had lightened the inmates of the house of mourning of a load of grief.

It was not till the carriage had rolled out of the avenue into the high road, beyond the domains of the Hall, that the ambitious couple ventured to communicate to each other the mutual thoughts that had occupied them

during the day. Twigg then opened his mind cautiously, and the following colloquy ensued in the dark.

"Well, my dear, did you go all over the Hall!"

"I did, my dear, every room in it."

"Well?"

"All very good and substantial, — and most delightful bed-rooms; but there's a want goes all through the house."

"And what's that, madam?"

"Cupboards," responded Mrs. Twigg, to whose ideas the greatest merit of a dwelling-house was that of a merchant-ship, namely, "extensive stowage."

"Cupboards be hanged! Did you see the cellars?"

"No, my dear, but I did the butler's pantry."

"Well?"

"There's mines, Mr. T.! Heaps upon heaps of gold and silver plate; not all filigree and open work, but solid and massy. Such waiters! such cups! such dishes! — But there's one thing awkward."

"What's that, madam?"

"Why they've all got stags' heads on 'em, and ours is a bee."

"Fiddlesticks, madam."

"To be sure, all that may be altered and eradicated to match. We can turn the bees into little deers."

"If you please, madam, you'll keep your fool's tongue in your head. It ain't as if we were in possession. I would n't do any thing undelicate or premature, except between ourselves."

"To be sure not, Mr. Twigg; but our two speculations can't hurt any one's feelings while they are kept primitive to ourselves. There's no harm, I hope, in saying one prefers the Hall to the Hive?"

"I'll tell you what, madam, if the Hall comes to me in course of law, I should n't decline. But if not, a man of my property, says you, can do without it."

"It must be owned, Mr. T., as yet it's only hearsay about Mr. Walter Tyrrel's being lawfully unbegotten in wedlock. We've no one's words for it but our son's, that he heard the young Squire Ringwood call him a bastard. Not that the Hall, as you say, is exactly what one would wish. The drawing-room is too far removed from the servants: you'd never know what's going on in the kitchen."

"D—n it, madam, I tell you we ain't come in yet; but that's always your way, blab, blab, blab, — Sir Mark ain't dead yet."

"No, but he's as good — and so as one don't shorten him, there's no harm in sayin' he'd live a while longer if he'd give more vent — but he sets in to it, and he'll be gone before the fall of the leaf. What's the she to Baronet, if you come into the title?"

This important question obtained no answer; not that Twigg was gone to sleep, for he was wide awake to his own interest and importance, but he happened to be absorbed in a double calculation of the chance of succeeding to the Justiceship, which Mr. Rivers wished to resign, and the expense of standing for the county, — an honour Sir Mark Tyrrel had always declined. His partner knew better than to disturb him at such moments by repetitions, and the rest of the ride passed in silence. The reader will easily conceive, from the foregoing dialogue, that the sympathy of the Twiggs with the sorrows of the day had not been without alleviation; indeed the drift of some injudicious remarks and questions on the part of the lady, had been detected by the suspicious vigilance of St. Kitts. For instance, she condoled with him on the sad shock to his uncle, who could not possibly live over it, — and what a loss it would be to himself — especially as he was a sort of orphan: and then she made some very particular inquiries

about his mother. She hoped, in conclusion, his uncle would do something for him — she meant something certain, as nobody knew who might start up for the estates. She had heard a talk, she said, of buying him a commission in the army, and, as a friend, she'd advise him, under present precarious circumstances, to get it settled as soon as he could. It was very hard parents' sins should come upon their children — but so it was. The Creole winced under her words: a new thorn of no common magnitude was planted in his side, and added its pangs to that retributive accumulation of tormenting doubts and fears which inevitably attends on a course of crime.

The prognostic of Mrs. Twigg seemed too likely to be verified. The health of Sir Mark rapidly declined, partly in consequence of his abandonment of all his accustomed field-sports, nay, his daily rides even were discontinued. Such an extreme change in his habits would alone have seriously affected his constitution, if it had not been broken down by the access of violent grief and the subsequent preying of his mind upon itself, for he had suffered intensely though silently. The effect was that of premature old age; he lost his vigour and activity, his appetite and his sleep, symptoms beyond the power of medicine to remove, although, in compliance with his sister's wish, he placed himself under the care of Dr. Bellamy. But the wound was incurable, and he knew it, and he prepared himself to meet his end with the manly composure that belonged to his character. He considerately made all his worldly arrangements, which were marked by his usual benevolence and rectitude, and thenceforward his earthly thoughts rested chiefly on the Creole; to whom, as his heir and successor, he gave much excellent advice for his future guidance. In this mood, he one day desired the company of St. Kitts to the kennel, in order to bestow on him the fruits of his own experience as a master of hounds. But he had miscalculated his own strength; after turning the key he retreated from the door with a bewildered look.

"I cannot," he said, "I dare not — every hound that knows me knew *him*. — But mind what I say, look to 'em now and then with your own eyes — Dick is one of the trustiest, but we none of us perform the worse for being overlooked ———"

"My dear uncle," said the Creole; "I hope the day is far, far distant, when they will want my inspection."

"No, Walter no," — said the Baronet; "I'm as good as run into — it's a sign I'm sinking, that my sorrows are so mute — I can't help talking in the style, but I've done with hounds and hunting altogether. One more halloo, and you have heard my last." —

So saying, he gave a weak and wavering cry, as different from his old jovial shout in the field, as the utterance of a ghost might be supposed in comparison with the living voice — all his bodily energies were extinct.

"There," he said, "do you think hounds would be cheered by such a sound as that? My own dogs don't answer to it — except one — and do ye know which it was that opened?"

The Creole knew well, but he was silent.

"It was Deathbell, boy, old Deathbell," said the Baronet; "one of Warde's deep tolling breed. It's may be a warning, but I don't flinch at it, he winds nothing more than I do myself. My head runs all one line, and that's to where all my hopes are gone to earth. If you would know where to have me, you must make a cast towards Tylney Church."

"My dearest uncle," said the Creole, "for the sake of those who survive, you ought not to despond. Time is a cure for all griefs, and the many years I hope you have yet to see ———"

"One will be enough for me," answered the Baronet, "and that is in its wane; I'm on my last legs. From this day forward, St. Kitts, look on the

pack as your own, keep 'em up as a master should, for the sake of the county and the old family name. Be pleasant to the farmers, and wave wheat; mind and preserve hospitality. You 'll find a cellar well stocked. Be the old English gentleman, and that says every thing."

"This is too painful," said the Creole; "every word wrings my heart."

"Keep on all my servants," continued the Baronet, without attending to the other's exclamation; "do'nt part with one of them: they belong to a good old breed that, if I'm not mistaken, is wearing out. Not so showy and flourishing may be, but stanch and steady to their work. Stand up for Church and King, and be kind to your aunt — poor Kate!"

"Alas!" said the Creole, "this is dreadful, every word is a farewell."

"Above all," concluded the Baronet, and he gave every word a distinct emphasis; "remember, Raby was innocent. They say a man on the borders of the other world sees clearer than common, and that is my solemn view of it. Keep up the good name of the Tyrrels as well as the estates, and never abide a blot upon the 'scutcheon, or a mortgage upon the land."

These were almost the last words of the good Baronet. The next morning he was found in his bed, stiff and cold, in an attitude that showed he had been towering towards Heaven, as the wounded bird does, before he died. The marble hands were piously joined like those of a Christian knight on an old monument; and if death be but a sleep, according to Hamlet, implying good or evil dreams, to judge by the placid countenance, the departed spirit had rejoined its dearest objects in that happy world, where love is as vital an element as the atmosphere we breathe in this.

Thus fell the head of this devoted house; the last main obstacle that had interposed between the Creole and his guilty object. In some minds such a consummation would almost incur a denial, or, at least, a doubting, of Providence, looking at the inequality of the dispensation. But poetical justice is one of the merest fictions; and consists, as the term imports, rather with Utopian views than with the real rugged course of human life. To place Virtue or Vice in one scale, and an adequate portion of Good or Evil, as reward and punishment in the other, may produce food meet for babes; but the picture has little reference to the true course of events in this variegated world, where the base and bad rejoice and revel daily in the high places, whilst excellence mourns in the dust. Honesty begs for bread, and knavery prospers, adding houses to houses, and land to land. The just suffer, whilst the unjust judge in ermine. Folly rules, and wisdom pines unheard. Vanity is caressed at the expense of genius, — and sanctimonious hypocrisy tramples on humble piety. The mortal balance, indeed, preponderates in favour of the wicked. It follows necessarily, that the unscrupulous man, who justifies all means by the end, and rejects neither fraud nor cruelty when they conduce to his purpose, must arrive more frequently, and by a shorter path, at his object, than the conscientious one who will not strain a principle or deviate one step from the line of rectitude. Thus wealth, power, and worldly honour, are apt to become the prizes of the crafty and the violent, the corrupt and the depraved; the swindler, the perjurer, and the tamperer with blood. Hence, such anomalous awards as the traitor's death to the patriot, the felon's imprisonment to the honest debtor, and persecution and poverty to a benefactor of mankind. The child, however, is taught by his copy-book that "Virtue is its own Reward," and every volume in his juvenile library not only inculcates the same principle, but holds out a direct promise of an equitable adjustment in this world, which is only to be looked for in another: an absurd system, by which, instead of being forearmed and forewarned by a practical prospect of the trials to come, the good boy grows up a good man, and is astonished and disgusted to find himself, instead of being even a silver-gilt Whittington, a contemned object, walking the world barefoot and penniless, with the

reward of Virtue hanging upon his neck, in the likeness of one of those tin or pewter medals of merit that used to decorate him at his academy. This is an evil in our literature that demands correction: as our preparatory schooling is chiefly derived from the writings and the teaching of the female sex, it would be well if the schoolmistress would go abroad with the schoolmaster, and pick up some principle of conduct for youth, superior to the servile, selfish one of the puppy, who is conscious of the breaker behind his heels, with a dog-whip in one hand, and a piece of liver in the other.

Events sometimes crowd so closely upon each other's heels, that the pen of the historian must adopt a similar pace. Briefly then, the tomb again yawned, and again it closed, having in one short month, received three kindred corses, and the Creole found himself invested with the title of Baronet, and in possession of the vast estates of Tylney Hall. He did not enjoy this accession undisturbed. The Twiggs, as he had foreseen, came forward and disputed the validity of his claim; but a perusal of the will, and the marriage certificate of Colonel Tyrrel with Indiana Thurot, effectually dissipated the hopes of the Ex-Sheriff, who abruptly departed with his helpmate, venting execrations in the bitterness of their defeat on the innocent mansion they had coveted, the lady loudly declaring, as she stepped from the threshold, that she would never — never — never set foot in its odious doors any more.

With something of a kindred resolution, Mrs. Hamilton left the Hall shortly after the funeral, with the ostensible purpose of residing for a while at Hawksley, for the sake of the companionship of her adopted daughter, Grace Rivers, but in reality because she could not endure to remain an inmate of the house since it became the property of her nephew. His ill-disguised exultation had not escaped her notice; his dismissal of some of the oldest servants, contrary to his uncle's express injunction, excited her indignation; and the haughty bearing he suddenly assumed, in striking contrast to his adulation of herself, seemed to justify the personal antipathy she had preconceived towards him. She even began to entertain vague suspicions with which she hardly dared to trust herself, and the frankness of her nature would not allow her to profess affection where she felt dislike, or to pretend to confidence where she entertained nothing but jealousy and mistrust. In spite, therefore, of the most urgent remonstrances and the warmest protestations from St. Kitts, who represented himself as one who would be totally bereaved by her absence, she persisted in her course, and the wheels of the Justice's carriage, as they rolled away with her, became wheels of torture to the Creole, or, as he must now be called, Sir Walter.

"There she goes, curse her," he muttered between his teeth, "to sow the seeds of her own infernal doubts and fancies in the mind of Grace: she hates me, I know she does, and my love in that quarter is as likely to thrive by her countenance as a peach under a north wall."

To the Scotchwoman, who accompanied her mistress, the change was equally desirable: educated in the serious and somewhat rigid religious principles of her country, she criticised with proportionate alarm the proceedings of the new master of the house, who had gradually imbibed some of the skeptical notions of his foster-mother. As men are apt in such cases, he sought to reconcile himself to his infraction of the divine laws, by disputing their authority. Accordingly, to the great horror of Tibbie, he discontinued the family devotions, in which, agreeable to old practice, Sir Mark and his domestics had met and mingled in their petitions and thanksgivings to the throne of grace; nor did Sir Walter, like his predecessor, attend punctually at the parish church on each sabbath, to join in the responses with sonorous emphasis, or receive the pastor's final benediction with a devout amen. In leaving such a house, the Scotchwoman conceived she was but opportunely flying from the wrath to come: from a roof that trembled

over her head, walls that tottered round her, and chimneys that attracted the lightning of heaven. Others of the domestics adopted her views, though perhaps with more of temporal leaven, and gave warning. Amongst others old Deborah, who, in spite of her age and her asthma, still breathed, if breathing it might be called, declared her determination of leaving a home where she had been born and bred. Like some other great men, the Creole found that he had acquired power without popularity.

The Squire went a step, or rather a stride, beyond Mrs. Hamilton, in his disgust and his suspicions; he would have been displeased with an angel for filling a station which Ringwood ought to have occupied, but he had always regarded the Creole as in part a devil, and he now looked upon him and loathed him, as a fiend incarnate. He hated, as he had loved, exclusively, "with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength." He would have hunted the wide world over for a rival heir, and he would have supported a plausible claim to the utmost extent of his purse; and in this object he was soon gratified. Some manuscript verses on the death of Ringwood had been privately circulated amongst the gentry of the neigbourhood; but whilst every body admired the exquisite tenderness of the sentiment, the novelty and the beauty of the imagery, and the fine Miltonic flow and harmony of the versification, few cared to inquire earnestly into the authorship. But it was otherwise with Squire Ned; the subject rendered it to him a prize poem of all that had ever been written since Homer, and with that unwearied dogged pertinacity of purpose which distinguished him, he tasked himself to discover the writer, and by dint of sagacity and perseverance, he at last traced the production to that ragged troubadour "Tom in Tatters." The vagabond minstrel was immediately asked to the Cottage, an invitation which was several times declined; and it was only by a stratagem at last that the Squire obtained an interview with the eccentric poet. The latter, when taxed with the composition of the elegy, frankly admitted it, and confessed his gratification that it proved so acceptable to the feelings of one whose devoted attachment to the subject of the lament was so universally acknowledged. Beyond this avowal, the Squire could obtain no information from his guest, whose superior manners and polished diction, nevertheless, evinced a marvellous discrepancy between his private character and his public habits. The tattered one, however, sedulously avoided any allusion to his former life or his earlier pursuits; and it was only after several bottles of Madeira had been broached, and when the treacherous propensity to drink had betrayed the stranger beyond his self-command, that he entered upon his own history. He had been educated, he said, at the University, but some Bacchanalian orgies with a party in low life, which he had entered into with a view to the study of human nature, had led to his disgraceful expulsion from college. It had, unfortunately, escaped his recollection that such classes were not comprised in the course of humanity prescribed by Alma Mater, who accordingly cast him from her bosom, branded as a reprobate son, that she rejected for ever. The tears streamed down his cheeks during the recital, but his sighs amounted almost to groans, as he described the progress of his subsequent degradation.

"And now here I am," he concluded; "I was ranked with beasts, and I have degenerated to suit their classification. I am as they described me, genius and species, a sot — a vagabond — an abject dependant — a disgrace to society — a burden to others and to myself. I dreamed once I was destined for better things; but the best I now hope is, at the first fine holyday the schoolboys will go shouting and capering after the pauper funeral of 'Tom in Tatters.'"

With these words the unfortunate student jumped hastily up, intending to make a precipitate retreat, but he happened to be in Ned's panoramic parlour, and he could not discover the door; he had no remedy, therefore

but to await the Squire's pleasure, who by his odd, yet honest and hearty expressions of sympathy, at last prevailed upon the poor fellow to compose himself. They resumed their drinking, and towards midnight, in the warmth of his heart, the outcast communicated to his new friend, that he was a descendant of the old intimate of Ned, Sir Theophilus Tyrrel, who had been "cleaned out upon the turf." The announcement upset all the Squire's recent apathy towards the human race: he jumped up, and actually hugged his informant, at some risk to his dilapidated garments; for, like the bereaved Macduff, he thought he had found the Malcolm under whose banner he was to do vengeance on the bloody Thane. The night was passed in questions and mutual deliberation, and the morning saw the Squire, mounted upon Barney, on his way to the Hall, in order to give Sir Walter the nuts to crack which he had gathered from the genealogical tree of "Tom in Tatters."

CHAPTER XL.

Come hither, boy, come hither to my arms;
Have I not plotted rarely? Nay, how 's this;
You stare affrighted at the touch of joy,
As if it were the worst, extremest wo.
No word, no sound, no stir, not ev'n, alas!
A smile to tell me, "Mother, I am glad."

ROXANA.

If in this exile dark and drear
To which my fate has doomed me now,
I should unnoticed die — what tear,
What tear of sympathy, will flow?
For I have sought an exile's wo,
And fashion'd my own misery:
Who then will pity me?

SPANISH ROMANCES.

AMONGST the many causes of disquietude which beset the mind of the new Baronet were two of peculiar interest and importance, namely, an unusual absence of his foster-mother, and the total silence of Woodley. In spite of his numerous rides and walks for the purpose, he had never been able to meet with Marguerite since the interview which preceded the discovery of the drowned body of his kinsman, and her peremptory and repeated injunctions deterred him from availing himself of the secret of her lonely abode. She ought naturally to have come forward with her congratulations to him on the success of her predictions; and with his anxious temperament, to doubt was to fear, and every delay seemed a new danger. On the other hand, although the fate of Raby had become a certainty, he could not help wondering that his correspondent in St. James's Street had not written to inform him of the non-arrival of the intended victim. But the reason of the omission was furnished to him from an unexpected source.

As he sat at breakfast, carelessly glancing over the columns of a morning journal, his eye was suddenly attracted by the words, "Fatal Duel — death of Peter Woodley, Esq.;" and a few following lines informed him, that the gentleman in question had been run through the body at a hostile meeting, which originated in a dispute at dice. The paper dropped from his hand, and a cold shiver ran through his frame, as he learned the sudden cutting off of his companion in former villanies: without knowing why, he associated the catastrophe with a secret misgiving, that his own exit would be of a violent nature; and the presentiment to which the paragraph gave birth, from that hour never deserted him. He was still labouring under the agitation which the tragical news had excited, when the Squire

was announced, and the personage who entered, and the unusual early hour of the visit, contributed to his discomposure. In fact, he stammered so in his welcome, that he felt compelled to apologize.

"I got up a little out of sorts," he said, "with my nerves unsettled; and they have just been still farther disturbed by reading in the paper the fall of an old college chum in a duel."

"Woodley, eh!" said the Squire, who had perused the same journal; "served him right; — got punished for cogging: — know the fellow that settled him."

"It's a deplorable case," said the Creole, "in all its bearings; but gambler, as I believe he was, one must be shocked at his being called to his account so unexpectedly."

"Nobody doubts," answered the Squire. "When the devil dies he'll have a chief mourner."

"Mr. Somerville," answered the Creole, as calmly as he could, "I can allow for your known ascetic temper, or such an expression would excite my serious displeasure. But I have observed with regret a kind of personal pique towards me in particular, unconscious as I am of any intentional cause of offence, ever since the lamentable death of ——"

"Hold hard!" exclaimed the Squire; "don't name him; — come to that by and by!" and the speaker was evidently suppressing passions which might have prompted him to some act of violence. But he mastered the impulse, and commenced an address, contrary to his usual style, in a deep, deliberate tone, without clipping off the pronouns.

"You are now Sir Walter Tyrrel, and the landlord of half the parish. It was a great stake, and you stood upon a lucky horse when you backed the black one with a long tail and a head full of feathers. But perhaps you are not so fast in the saddle as you think; and I have got a stiff fence or two for you to get over. A change may come. Here you are in high keep at rack and manger; but you may find yourself some day turned out to grass like Brown Bastard."

"I understand your last allusion, sir," said the Creole, his lips quivering with passion, "and it points out to me the drift of your discourse. I presume the question of my legitimacy is to be again agitated?"

"Right — you've hit on it," answered the Squire; "so give tongue at once, and I'll hark to you."

"I should have thought," answered Sir Walter, "that the decision Mr. Twigg came to would have satisfied every one upon the point you have come, I must say unnecessarily, to discuss. I might reasonably urge the painful nature of the subject as an excuse for declining to enter into it afresh: but, in consideration of your standing as a friend of the family, I shall make no objection to your seeing the documents."

"Not I," answered the Squire, hastily, and falling into his old manner; "can't judge — out of my line — forgeries may be."

The Creole winced, for the words had struck upon one of his own misgivings; but he struggled to maintain his composure, and addressed the Squire with an air of lofty indifference.

"May I presume to ask, sir, on whose behalf you are so much interested as to forget the ordinary rules of good manners?"

"Manners will mend," answered Ned sharply; "wish some matters could be mended too. Mayhap you have heard of Tom Tatters?"

A scornful laugh burst from Sir Walter at the idea of the rugged itinerant setting up as a candidate for the hereditary honours and possessions of the house of Tyrrel, and he received with a sneer of pity the paper that was tendered to him, whereon the Squire had traced with his own hand a sort of tree in illustration of the pedigree of his protegée. It was, however, made out with so much of the phraseology of the stud-book — Dam,

Somebody; Grandam, Somebody else; by Such-a-one out of So-and-so — that the Creole was some time in picking out its meaning.

"All plain enough," said Ned, jealous of the character of his performance; "don't want spelling over: first, old Theophilus; then two sons, Theodore and Timothy. Twigg comes from Timothy, and tattered Tom from Theodore, the eldest branch."

"I will grant you all your branches and Twiggs to boot," answered Sir Walter, coolly. "But now condescend to view the other side of the tree. Listen: Rupert was the elder brother of Theophilus. From Rupert, Mark; and my father was Sir Mark's only brother ——"

"*There*, pull up," said Ned. "Remember the bend sinister; — might be the wrong side of the blanket."

"That question, if you would be so rash as to moot it, must be tried at law," answered Sir Walter, contemptuously; and, with an insolent parade of his toothpick, he rose from the table, and sauntered to the window.

The Squire's one eye glistened like a red-hot coal. "Law, eh!" he said: "civil or criminal? or, mayhap, both at once? — Soon see. *Good bye to Sir Walter!*" he added significantly, as he reached the door, which, after a long withering frown, like that of Byron's Corsair, he closed behind him with a sudden slam.

The Creole, in spite of his affected indifference, was ill at ease: the determined inveterate character of the Squire assured him that the new claim, however preposterous and unfounded, would be brought forward, and prosecuted with all possible pertinacity, necessarily involving a heavy expense, and an infinite deal of personal trouble, annoyance, and mortification.

"That maimed paw is lucky for him," he muttered. "If he could hold a sword, I might try my skill at fence on him; and it could not be fleshed to better purpose. Bullets are out of the question: he's a candle-snuffer with the pistol in his left hand."

He was absorbed in a calculation of the probable steps that would be taken by the tattered candidate and his patron, and devising some scheme for avoiding the public spectacle of so ridiculous a contest, when a servant presented a little billet to his hand, the thrilling contents of which instantly banished the recent occurrence from his thoughts. There were only two words in it; but those words were "Hennessey's Hut." His hand was at the bell-rope to order his horse, when he recollected that the hut referred to was situated in an intricate wood, of difficult access even on foot. Unluckily, it lay between the Hall and Hollington; and, in spite of his intense impatience, he was compelled to delay his departure, for fear of being observed and followed by the suspicious Squire, whose road lay in the same direction. As soon as prudence allowed, he set out, at the pace of a pedestrian in training for a match against time; and, in a comparatively short space, he found himself on the verge of the dense wood which enveloped his foster-mother's retreat. Nobody but a man impelled by as strong a motive, or an ardent sportsman, would have straggled far into such a wilderness; — path there was little or none; it had been so overgrown by briers — so interlaced, that the passage was slow and painful. In some places the trees arched overhead, to an almost utter exclusion of the light of day; in others they started asunder, and suffered the sunbeam to visit the damp earth, that smelt noisomely of the rotting or rotted leaves of past seasons. The Creole's hands were filled with thorns, from eagerly tearing asunder the obstacles to his progress; and he was dabbled up to the waist by the wet underwood through which he rushed, while the features of the place became more savage and dreary as he approached the dwelling supposed to be haunted by the spirit of the murdered keeper. Several times the disturbed adder darted across the path, and the iron tolling of the raven

broke harshly and ominously upon the silence. The trees increased in size, and wreathed fantastically in more distorted attitudes, whilst the huge gnarled roots protruded here and there from the soil, like the bones of antediluvian monsters. No other woman than Marguerite could have selected such a dreary spot for her residence; indeed, it seemed to acquire more than masculine nerve and courage to contend with all its horrors, natural and superstitious. The hut stood in a small open plot, near the centre of the wood; it was a sort of log-house, like those in the back settlements of North America, and had been constructed at the whim of a fanciful recluse, named Hennessey, who, however, made up his quarrel with the world after a year's residence. It then became the abode of the unfortunate keeper, whose violent death, but for Marguerite's resolution, would have left it untenanted for ever. It consisted of two rooms, which were divided by a partition of lath and clay, whereon the stain of blood was still visible. The outer door had been shivered by the ruffians who perpetrated the savage deed, and had never been replaced, so that the Creole stepped into the house without knocking. The voice of Marguerite saluted him immediately from the inner chamber, desiring him to sit down on the chest till she had completed her dressing. The prescribed seat was a sort of large sea chest, and was the only furniture of the room, except an old hogshead, which served for a table. On the top of this convenience, however, stood a teapot, and cup and saucer of antique china, which, to a virtuoso in that brittle ware, would have been inestimable; a solitary silver spoon lay beside the teapot, but it was of the most massive form and richest workmanship. These were the only objects in the room, and the Creole had leisure to gaze and wonder at them till he was weary. It seemed as if his wayward foster-mother intended to make a trial of his patience. To add to his disquiet, he fancied that his ear detected a whisper in the adjoining room; and, however unlikely the supposition that Marguerite could have a companion, it seemed to make every minute an age till she appeared. At last, when his temper was on the point of giving way, the door of the inner chamber suddenly opened, and a figure presented itself that fixed him breathless to his seat.

It was Marguerite — not in the squalid attire of the wandering queen of the gipsies, but in the rich splendid costume of an oriental princess.

She wore a short robe of carnation satin, descending nearly to the knee, where it finished with a rich gold fringe. Underneath this tunic was a white satin petticoat, elegantly embroidered; full trousers of the same material were fastened close above the ankle so as to set off its symmetry, and her slippers, in colour, matched her tunic. Her waist was circled by a broad zone, fastened in front by a diamond clasp, and the flowing sleeves of the robe were looped up at mid-arm by clusters of the same jewels. The under sleeves, of a gossamer texture, were confined at the wrists by massive bracelets of pure gold, and every taper finger of her well-formed hand glittered with one or more jewelled rings. On her head she wore a turban of a singular but becoming form, the material of which it was composed being one of those Indian many-coloured shawls which are always so picturesque. The bosom was covered, but not concealed, by the same delicate muslin as the under-sleeves, and her throat was encircled by a collar of gold to match the bracelets. Altogether it was apparently the costume of no particular nation, but a fancy dress adopted at the suggestion of her own taste.

She smiled at witnessing the astonishment of the Creole, and for a while enjoyed his admiration in silence.

"Well, Sir Walter," she said at last, in a tone of suppressed triumph, "what do you think of me?"

"I have seldom seen any thing," answered the Creole, with his eyes fixed like a man talking in his sleep — "no, I have never seen any thing so rich and tasteful."

"I asked the question, Sir Walter," she said, "chiefly with reference to my poor self;" and she remained standing before him in an attitude well chosen for the display of a still graceful figure.

The Creole was a warm admirer of beauty, and although years and exposure, and perhaps sorrow, had taken off the lustre of her charms, they had not much quenched the brilliancy of Marguerite's jet black eyes, nor destroyed the fine contour of her countenance. Neither had her shape so lost its symmetry but that the eye could still recognise the original excellence of the mould. Enough remained both of form and face to prove that, at one time, she must have been amongst the most lovely and fascinating of her sex. He answered her in an animated tone,

"I think it is a pity Time did not stand still when he had such an object to gaze upon."

She was charmed with this flattering reply, which addressed itself to her weakest point; her eyes glistened, and exclaiming that she had forgotten to congratulate him on his new title, she advanced hastily and clasped him in a fond embrace. She held him in her arms so long and so closely, that it required almost a struggle on the part of the Creole to free himself, and get upon his feet. He then offered her the vacant seat, but she motioned to him to sit down again, while from the inner room she fetched a rude chair, in which she placed herself full in front of her foster-son.

"And now, Marguerite," inquired the latter, "will you inform me of the purport of this Sultana presence, at which I still stare and wonder as if I were dreaming with my eyes open, like Abon-Hassan, in the Arabian Nights?"

"What does it mean," answered Marguerite, with a smile, "but that I am going to resume my station in society? Such as you see me now, except that I was younger and more blooming, I was once every day of the week. Sir Walter Tyrrel has never invited me, but I am going back with him to the Hall that is now his own!"

"To the Hall!" echoed the Creole.

"Yes, to the Hall," answered Marguerite, "where should a mother seek her home but in the house of her son?"

"Of her son?" repeated the Creole.

"Of her son," reiterated Marguerite. "Oh, Walter! what heart but a mother's could have gone through what mine has for your sake? But compose yourself, Walter, compose yourself as I do, for I am afraid of my own happiness."

The Creole made no reply. He gasped for breath, and would have recoiled but for the wall at his back, to which he seemed fixed as motionless as a figure upon a frieze. He was stunned and petrified by the blow.

"Walter, dearest Walter, speak to me," exclaimed the woman, in a voice of alarm, at the same time taking his hand. "The foster-mother was all a fable; it 's your own parent stands before you — Indiana herself."

"Away, woman! away!" cried the Creole, fiercely, freeing his hand and starting to his feet at the same moment. "So then I am a dupe at last; oh! had I foreseen this," and clasping his hands above his head, he paced rapidly to and fro across the narrow room with the frantic demeanour of a maniac.

"Walter Tyrrel, listen to me, I beg you — I beseech you — I implore you," exclaimed the woman, at each adjuration raising her voice, till it became a scream, and at the same time clinging to him by the neck, the arms, or even the knees. But he continually swung himself out of her grasp, and, as a last resource, she left his violence to exhaust itself, planting herself in the mean while in the entry, with each hand grasping the door-post, to prevent his retreat.

As she anticipated, his frenzy gradually decreased, but it was only to

subside into a more terrible calmness. He stopped suddenly, with his face close to hers, so that their eyes looked searchingly into each other, whilst the voice he addressed her with scarcely rose above a whisper.

"She-devil that you are, did you wind me in your hellish toils but for this — to make me the pitiful tool of your own ambition?"

The eyes of Marguerite flashed angrily, but she restrained her passion.

"Walter," she said, "we will talk when you are calmer — but take one warning, do not miscall me — use no evil word that shall make you ready hereafter to pluck out your own tongue by the roots."

"Come and talk on, then," said the Creole, sullenly retreating and throwing himself again upon the chest, whilst the woman reoccupied the chair. They watched each other for some minutes in silence, which Marguerite was the first to break.

"Walter, the hour is come that must seal my happiness or misery — the hour to which I have looked forward through long years of scorn and sorrow. Oh, Walter, never did woman's heart beat so thickly even at a love tale as mine, when the sound of your foot entered this hut; it said to me — 'Indiana, there comes your son, the child you have pressed in many an unrequited embrace, but who will now return you love for love.' If I had any ambition, it came last, when I whispered to myself, 'and that son is Sir Walter Tyrrel.'"

"Say rather," answered the Creole, haughtily, "that when I became what I am, Marguerite envied Indiana. It is well performed, but I have sat before at a play in a barn, where a stroller, a vagrant Jewess may be, has personated the Queen of Egypt."

"But she had **not** Cleopatra's own jewels," answered the woman, glancing at her hands, which glittered with many-coloured gems. "Nor did she wear Antony's picture in her bosom" — and she drew forth the miniature of the Creole's father, and held it up before his eyes.

"A waiting woman has purloined as much before now," answered the latter, with a sneer. "As for that picture, I here claim it as my own, by right."

"Claim it as my son," answered the woman, "and it is yours. The child must take the mother with the father — reject me, Walter, and you reject him."

"I must have better proof," said the Creole, smiling scornfully, "before I adopt such a motley parentage. For my own part, I believe in the force of blood: if your story were true, there would have been some hereditary outbreak before this, but I have never taken yet to gipsy wanderings, to tell fortunes, or to rob hen-roosts."

"You forget my warning," said the woman, sharply; "if I have been a wanderer and reputed gipsy, it was for your own sake. Talk not of force of blood — water even draws to water, but if your heart does not yearn towards mine, it has no blood in its arteries: the first time I saw Walter Tyrrel, mine drew to him as the loadstone. If cold iron can attract iron, what must be the warm impulse of kindred flesh and blood?"

"Since you choose to appeal to natural philosophy," said Sir Walter, sarcastically, "I must remind you that such attraction is reciprocal. The iron leaps to the magnet, as the magnet is impelled towards the iron; but was that the case at our first interview? The attractive impulse was all your own; to me, if you remember, the sensation was repulsive."

"True — oh, true!" exclaimed the woman, pressing her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out the scene he had conjured up, of maternal yearnings, and their bitter disappointment. "But the failure, Walter, was yours, and not mine. Yes, it is I who ought to reject, who ought to disclaim, who ought to disown a being so unlike myself, for, with all her faults, poor Indiana could love, cruelly as it seems doomed to be requited by both father and son! Oh Walter, dearest Walter, in pity to my past pangs, spare me

my present ones;" and in spite of herself, her wild black eyes were quenched in a gush of tears.

"I am sorry, Marguerite," said Sir Walter, in a gentler tone, "that my allusion to the past has given you so much pain; but forget our first meeting. I have since learned to estimate the tried fidelity and affectionate devotion of my foster-mother."

"Ay, there lies the stumbling-block," said Marguerite, as if speaking to herself. "But there were reasons, weighty reasons, which events have justified, for my remaining unknown, though it was a sore trial, and self-denial. Many times, in spite of prudence, my bosom has panted with the secret, almost to bursting; many times has the dear name been upon my tongue, that I now dare to call you by — my son, my own son!"

"Marguerite, if you would have me attend to your warning," said the Creole, relapsing into his severity, "I would recommend you to drop that title, and not press upon me what is a palpable after-thought. Granting you to have been my parent, a secrecy so essential to my welfare as you represent, might have been safely intrusted to my own keeping."

"Suppose then another motive," answered the woman. "When Walter Tyrrel was torn from these arms he was a mere infant; he could not even lisp my name. When I found him again, years had converted him into a boy, but he knew not his mother's face — he knew not her voice; he spurned her, as well he might, in the garb of a vagrant, for if his young memory could recall a trace of her, it must have been as something similar to what is now before him. Was it a crime then, Walter, that before she demanded the title, she wished to display the affection of a mother? — that before she claimed the love of her child, she endeavoured to earn it?"

"As a foster-mother," said Sir Walter, quietly.

"A hireling — a mercenary!" exclaimed the woman. "Her functions only begin, when the pre-eminent ones of a mother have come to an end! Where are her throes, her pangs, her painful pleasure and her pleasant pain, that link her for ever to her offspring through bliss or wo? No, Walter, none but a parent could have endured what I have gone through for your sake. Have I not watched for hours in piercing wind and drenching rain, only for a glimpse of you, to hear the sound of your voice? Have I not hovered about you like a spirit, to guard you from harm? and toiled like a slave, till my toil became refreshing, because it was for your welfare? Have I not even, to be near you, discarded the character of woman, and chosen these blood-stained walls," — she pointed to the partition, — "for my abode?"

"Enough of this," answered Sir Walter, petulantly. "I am not so inclined to underrate your services, that they need thus to be set forth. Any thing in reason you may command — in return for the interest you have been pleased to take in my fortunes."

"Listen then," returned Marguerite, "since we are to treat on the footing of a common bargain; the reward I ask is small — a few syllables pronounced by the breath I gave you. Only acknowledge me as your mother, and I will cancel every other debt. I will forget that through me you are Sir Walter Tyrrel — that by my counsel you are not marching — perhaps bleaching, on the burning sands of Egypt. I will forget even that I have been wronged and cast off; though I have been your associate," she added, wildly, "in plans that to disclose would consign you to the gibbet!"

"I defy your threat," retorted Sir Walter, secretly alarmed, however, by such an intimation from one who was capable of any extravagance in her fits of violence, even to the denunciation of herself. "Whatever *might* be schemed, the event that has taken place was by course of nature. But you are mad, Marguerite, you are mad — at least, upon one subject; and I should be mad too, to accept your self-delusions in proof of such a visionary relationship."

"I may be mad," answered Marguerite. "I have enough to make me so; but there are others who are sane. So surely as you are the son of Herbert Tyrrel, am I your mother: it would be better if uncalled for, but there is evidence in the neighbourhood to the fact. Ask Pompey, the black footman at the Hive, who, in this dress, would recognise his former mistress at a glance."

The Creole was confounded; the passionate earnestness of Marguerite, her valuable ornaments, his father's picture, and, above all, the appeal to Pompey's evidence, conspired to convince him that there was some foundation for her claim. But his heart had become callous, and instead of viewing such a tie as an acquisition, he regarded it as one that would embarrass him; however valuable as an auxiliary, as a mother Marguerite would be but a tormenting encumbrance, perpetually interfering according to her dictatorial character with his purposed independence. And he anticipated the popular ridicule that would attach to him from such a parentage as the Queen of the Gipsies. Marguerite, meanwhile, fixed her dark eyes upon his face, as if to penetrate his thoughts, and the words with which she interrupted his reverie, proved that she interpreted them correctly.

"Walter, I guess your scruples. You apprehend that her vagrant Majesty will never be recognised as the Queen Dowager of Tylney Hall. But you know not the world as I do. Call me the mother of the wealthy Sir Walter Tyrrel, place me in this costume in your drawing-room, and you shall see a dozen contend at once who shall place the cushion beneath my feet! seat me thus upon a sofa, and you shall see a score languishing for the sign of my finger that invites the favoured one to my side." An appropriate motion of the hand accompanied the last sentence, and the sparkling eye, and flushing cheek of the speaker, betrayed that the picture of the future was but a reflection of past triumphs.

"Never," said the Creole, speaking as much to himself as his companion, "never: it might do in St. Christopher's, but not here; a vagrant,— a jail-bird, marked with stripes even——"

His auditor started to her feet like a storm personified: her brows lowered, her eyes lightened, and her voice thundered. "Dare not, Walter Tyrrel," she cried, "dare not to degrade your own mother. Such words as you have used should sear your lips! Down on your knee,—down, and beg my pardon. Let the whole world beside fail me in respect, but I will have yours!"

"Peace, woman, peace," cried the Creole, with equal vehemence, and likewise rising from his seat. "But mad, or not mad, there is no one here to heed your ravings. Now hearken yourself. Mother of mine, or mother not mine, makes no difference. Granting you to be what you allege, my father did not separate himself from you without some good reason of his own; and I mean dutifully to walk in his steps; but out of respect to *him*, I will consent to allow you a decent competence; but it must be on one condition,—that you return to the Western Islands, and place the Atlantic between me and yourself."

So saying, he made a movement to leave the hut, but Marguerite anticipated his intention, and resumed her old position in the doorway. "You pass not here," she cried, "except over my body, till I am recognised."

"I have named my terms," answered the Creole, deliberately folding his arms, in token of his determination. "If I call you mother it must be when you are in St. Kitts."

A sharp shrill cry burst from Marguerite; it sounded like a trumpet note of retreat from a field of battle, where she had lost her all. But she fought as she fled. "Wretch!" she cried, "cold-blooded wretch, unworthy of father or of mother—but the curse shall return upon you, no issue shall ever spring from your loins! No offspring shall ever endear your hearth, no child shall ever draw you to your home. You shall walk through the world as

lonely and as desolate as I am, without a living creature to love you, or a being to love!"

"More gipsy-work," said Sir Walter, carelessly. "Tell me the rest of my fortune, and I will cross your hand with a crown. But this is child's play. You have real claims upon me, Marguerite, without setting up sentimental ones. I care not who bore me, so that I was born in wedlock; a point certain parties are inclined to dispute. May I depend upon the papers you gave me?"

"Trust to nothing," answered a stifled voice, and as the Creole looked at the speaker, he saw her leaning her head upon her hands against the door-post, whilst her body heaved as with convulsive spasms. Before he could get to her she was down; and she waved him from her with her arms at every attempt to raise her up again, whilst the blood flowed from her mouth so as to prevent her utterance. But her dark eyes spoke volumes as she fixed them upon the face of the Creole; they were full of reproach and resentment. Once or twice she tried to speak, but the effort caused the vital fluid to gush more violently; and with a mournful shake of the head, and a despairing motion of her hands, she intimated that hope was at an end. A cold dew started upon her forehead, her chest panted more violently, and, after a frightful struggle, she died choked with her own blood.

Such was the fate of Indiana Thurot, for it was that wretched woman herself who lay weltering at the feet of her unnatural son. Endowed by nature with extreme beauty and strong passions, which parental dotage had indulged, till she knew no law but her own ungovernable self-will, from the pampered spoilt girl she grew into the capricious imperious woman, whose merest whim, however extravagant, was sedulously gratified by one or other of the admirers who made her the object of their flattering idolatry. From amongst these she had selected Colonel Tyrrel as most worthy of her favour; he was handsome, elegant, and accomplished, and entertained an ardent affection, which she as fervently returned. A liaison ensued, of which the Creole was the fruit; but shortly after his birth, her impetuous temper began to show itself in the shape of the most frantic jealousy, whilst her tyrannical disposition prompted her to the greatest cruelties in the treatment of her slaves. At length, in an unbridled fit of passion, she inflicted the wound which shortened the days of the Colonel; after which she fled, it was believed, to take refuge with a former paramour, with whom she proceeded to England, where her companion shortly deserted her. In the course of the next twelve years she had formed two or three short-lived connexions with persons of wealth and consequence, whom her fascinations had enthralled, but her original violence and lavish expenditure invariably dissolved every fresh tie; and even in the most prosperous seasons of such attachments, her heart reverted with regret and bitterness to the past. In such a frame of mind she learned the arrival of Colonel Tyrrel in England with his son, and she immediately determined to throw herself in his way and sue for a reconciliation, but his speedy death defeated her project. All her affections then concentred in the young Walter; and the mode in which this engrossing feeling developed itself has been already told. A love of the mysterious and the romantic, a peculiar fondness for intrigue even in the smallest matters, and her habits of uncontrolled liberty, impelled her to the strange unsettled mode of life she had chosen to adopt. At first, her scheme for the aggrandizement of Sir Walter was unmixed with any other object, but by degrees she joined with it a hankering to resume that splendour and sway which she had formerly enjoyed. Hence her catastrophe. She died as she had lived, a victim to her own unrestrained passions; and the same hour that saw her decked in the gorgeous attire of former days, beheld her stretched on the ground a livid corpse; a spectacle the more appalling, as the lifeless flesh lay glittering in all the "pomp, pride, and circumstance," of its earthly vanities.

The shock to Sir Walter's feelings was not so great as to stun his prudence or deaden his cupidity. After a brief epitaph over the body, he proceeded carefully to ransack the adjoining apartment, which he found scantily furnished, yet exhibiting one more token of the character of the deceased. The bed was sordidly mean, but her toilet was perfect in its appointments, some of which were particularly costly. His strictest search was for papers whereby he might have been compromised, but he found merely one small packet, though its contents confirmed his worst misgivings; they were rough drafts of the letters and the certificate which Marguerite had given to him, all in the same hand, and with such erasures, additions, and interlineations, and even marginal remarks, as to leave no doubt of their being the originals of concerted forgeries. A discovery so fatal to his peace steeled his heart, and drew from him a bitter imprecation on the author.

"She might well say trust to nothing," he muttered. "Some day, had she lived, in one of her fury fits at my declining to gratify her preposterous demands, she would have turned my arms against me, and challenged her own precious fabrications."

So saying, with the coolness of a savage Indian rifling a slain enemy, he took the jewels from her person, drew the gemmed rings from her fingers, and transferred his father's miniature to his own bosom. He then left the hut, and returned to the Hall, leaving the remains of Indiana, the once paramount idolized beauty of St. Christopher's, to be discovered by chance or to moulder where they lay — the latter fate being the most probable, considering the haunted character of the place.

CHAPTER XLI.

Learning is your only having!
Why then he has the best of ownerships,
Can winds and angry billows wreck his learning?
Can thieves and midnight robbers steal his learning?
Can rot and mildew perish all his learning?
Can learning be consumed by fire, or locked
For ages in the limbo of the law?
Is learning in the stocks? Can it be spent
By prodigals? Can learning ever lose
Its master like a dog? Pray be content,
Learning is surest of the gifts we have!

TOWNE AND GOWNE.

TIME rolled on; six months passed away, and Sir Walter experienced no new inquietude. The ghost of the haunted hut had still the body of Indiana in its keeping; and the Squire had found more difficulty than he had anticipated in proving the identity and descent of his protegée. The only person who could have supplied any information was Twigg; but the ex-sheriff resolutely set his face against the claim, and refused to acknowledge any relationship with a tatterdemalion who could not bring a good character for industry and application, to say nothing of sobriety, from his last place. Ned had felt the propriety of introducing the cousins to each other, and accordingly he took Tom with him to the Hive, clad in a new suit of mourning, and looking quite a gentleman, without any trace of his recent reckless habit, save a rather rubicund complexion, which, after all, only made him look like the incumbent of a fat living. The Squire never stood upon etiquette, and the visit he paid was so early that he arrived when the family were seated at breakfast.

"Mercy on us! Mr. Squire," said Mrs. Twigg, "here's an early visit."

"Friends can't meet too soon," answered the Squire; and then, turning to the master of the house, he added, "brought a new cousin — one you never saw before; been a little under a cloud, but by and by will be as bright as any of us."

"He is very welcome to the Hive," answered Twigg; "I am not a man to disown flesh and blood, because of a low beginning. I don't care who knows it, but, as shiny as I am now, I rose in a fog myself. Pray, what is the gentleman's name?"

"Sir Thomas Tyrrel, if all had their rights," answered Ned; "son of old Theodore — grandsire Theophilus."

"I believe my uncle Theodore did have a son," answered Twigg, his countenance decidedly lengthening, "but he was a reprobate that never pushed on in life. If he'd fagged at his business early and late, as I did, he'd have been a doctor of divinity."

The unfortunate student hung his head.

"Sad job, sure enough," said the Squire; "got in a bit of a spree, and old Hilary kicked him out — very severe at Oxford; — old Hilary, above all!"

"Youth will be frolicsome," said Mrs. Twigg; "there's T. junior torments our lives out. What he'd do at college, Heaven knows! but I'm afraid he'd get into scrapes till he was scraped out too."

"Oxford be hanged," said the citizen, "he must rise to London dignities, as his father did before him. The less learning, says you, the more credit for cutting figures."

"Right," said Ned, with a knowing wink, "would n't train at Epsom to run at York. But let alone T. junior; come to Tom here — Tom in Tatters."

"Tom in Whats?" ejaculated Mrs. Twigg.

"Tatters," answered Ned; "strange cousin of yours, Mr. Twigg — just turned up, like a new potato."

"What! us own to *him*," said Mrs. Twigg, turning up her hands and eyes with horror; "Mr. Squire, I do wonder at you, when we 've every thing respectable about us, to bring such riff-raff into the house. Every body knows him, though you have smarted him up; he's tag-rag and bobtail at bottom! Why he's the hullabaloo of the whole parish!"

"Hold your fool's tongue, madam," said Twigg; "Mr. Squire can't mean to introduce to us a character that's of no use to society except to cast a slur upon people of property."

"Do intend, though!" said Ned. "Tom, speak up for yourself."

"There is no one here," said the student, "who could sympathise with what I should have to say."

"No matter —" said Ned, "do it for you. 'Here I am — been drunk now and then — who has not? — was rather rough in the coat from bad keep ——'"

"Rough in the coat," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, "a regular scarecrow!"

"Never mind Mrs. Twigg," said her husband, addressing the stranger, "she rhodomontades. Take my advice, whoever you are; begin the world again. Go up to London with a shilling in your pocket, and make your fortune. You've had a clerical education: go round to all the churches, and do n't be too high for any thing, no matter how low it is; that was my principle — commence humble. I once begun as a beadle, says you; but I leave off a bishop, with my share of church property."

"As for us," said Mrs. Twigg, "we could n't afford to do any thing for you if you *was* a relation. Every thing's dear; meat is unconscionable. What with one thing and t' other, I must say our expenses always premeditate our income."

"Not but if industry and perseverance met their reward," said Twigg, "I should be ready to assist any frugal individual. A man that has obtained his property by such means deserves our commiseration."

"Thank ye when it comes," said Squire Ned; "not a bad way of making up a book — backing a horse when his tail's past the winning post. Won't take to Tom, then?"

"Why don't Mr. Thomas take to himself," said Mrs. Twigg. "I 'm sure that 's Christianity —' every man for himself, and God for us all.' Nobody feels that more than we do."

"That 's sense for once," said Twigg. "We are certainly very prosperous; God has been for us, and, says you, so have we been for God. Since we 've lived at the Hive, we 've never missed a Sunday at church."

"And that 's more than the Pembertons can say," remarked Mrs. Twigg; "they skip all the wet Sundays because of the horses' coughs, and the servants' liveries."

"Church, eh?" said Ned; "you 're high church, and that 's the weathercock — turn with every wind that blows. Come along, Tom! 'Charity begins at home;' but can't find her — got the wrong address."

So saying, like the practical good Samaritan, the Squire led his protegee back to the cottage, where he took him in to bed, board, and lodging, on terms, cards of which are to be had only of those who keep open house. The Levite and his wife, in the mean time, excused themselves by a reflection which the latter put into words. "It was impossible," she said, "to feel any thing for any body what was nothing to nobody."

The Squire was disconcerted, but not discouraged, by the result of this visit; he sent out an agent to St. Christopher's to obtain information concerning the marriage of Colonel Tyrrel, and the birth of the Creole, whilst he set to work himself to hunt out evidence in support of the claim of his client. This was a task of some difficulty, owing to the irregular conduct of Tom, who in his degradation had purposely destroyed and sunk all traces of his original station. Thus nothing more was heard of the matter for some time, and the new Baronet began to flatter himself that the question was at rest; but although Ned was mute, he was picking out the scent with his usual sagacity and perseverance.

In the mean time, as Sir Walter had foreseen, his attachment to Grace Rivers seemed likely to be nullified by the death of its object. Every time he saw her, and he paid frequent visits at Hawksley, ostensibly on account of his aunt, she appeared more faded and wasted; and as he had augured of Mrs. Hamilton's companionship, he found himself looked upon, not merely with indifference, but dislike. Grace evidently shunned him; whenever she could with propriety withdraw she left him to the company of his aunt, and when she remained, his attempts to draw her into conversation were foiled by cold and laconic answers. Sometimes she replied to him even with a tone of asperity, and her few words conveyed, or at least were capable of being converted into some bitter reproach. He had sounded the Justice, and had reason to believe that his pretensions would be favourably received by the father, however the offer of his person and fortune might be treated by the daughter, and he resolved to bring the question to an issue. Chance at last afforded him an opportunity. She was sitting alone one day in the drawing-room, when Sir Walter Tyrrel was announced, and before she had time to frame any excuse, he entered the apartment. The moment was propitious; after a few compliments, and general remarks, to which she replied as briefly as usual, he suddenly assumed a great earnestness of manner, and asked her if "he was always to be so unfortunate as to labour under the displeasure of Miss Rivers?"

"I am not aware," said Grace, "of any expression of mine that could indicate such a feeling."

"I am happy to believe then," answered the Creole, "that I have been mistaken, and that your words did not intentionally meditate such wounds as they have inflicted. I have been grieved to the heart sometimes, to fancy that I suffered in the opinion of one whose favour I value above that of the whole world besides."

"Sir Walter Tyrrel can have little need of my poor opinion," answered

Grace, coldly. "He will find plenty to think well of him now he is the favourite of fortune."

"A painful pre-eminence," he said, "and too dearly purchased to afford me any pleasure. Fortune has indeed favoured me far beyond my deserts in a worldly sense; but when I placed my bereavements against it in the balance, I feel, alas, that I have lost far more than I have gained. With this regret I am sure my dear Miss Rivers will sympathize. How proud and happy should I be if we had all other sentiments in common."

"That is impossible," answered Grace, hastily.

"Say not so, my dear Miss Rivers," exclaimed the Creole, ardently; why should not love meet with love, as grief mingles with grief? Why should not sighs of passion encounter fellow sighs, as well as tear with tear in heartfelt communion? Why should not this white hand tremble to mine ——"

"No more of this, I beg," said Grace, disengaging her hand, which the Creole had grasped.

"I must — forgive me, dearest Miss Rivers," said Sir Walter, "but while this heart beats with love, my tongue must speak in unison. Mingle some pity for the living with your regret for the dead. Waste not in unavailing sorrow that lovely form ——"

"And waste not these flatteries," interrupted Grace, hastily, "on ears to which they are unwelcome." So saying she rose up, and was about to leave the room, but Sir Walter detained her.

"Do not, do not go," he said; "if it must be my last, at least grant me a longer audience; at least suffer me to lay my life and fortune at your feet, though they should be doomed to rejection. Allow me at least to show that I am not blind to such perfection, but that I love — I adore ——"

"Sir Walter," said Grace, angrily, "let me pass."

"Not till you have bid me hope," said Sir Walter, sinking on one knee; "place it as distant as you will, even like a star set in the farthest heaven, so that I may look forward without despair."

"I have no hope to give or to receive," answered Grace. "Respect my misery, and spare this mockery of a broken heart."

"Give it to my keeping, dear Grace," replied the Creole, smiling, "and I will answer for the cure. Sorrow is not immortal; and as for a broken heart, it is, I assure you, a mere poetical trope."

"Enough," answered Grace, indignantly, "I will hear no more."

"One word — another word," exclaimed Sir Walter, detaining her by her dress, "say that you do not hate me, and I shall still have hope to live upon."

"Then despair," answered Grace. "As I hate all that is base, cruel, and treacherous, I hate Sir Walter Tyrrel;" and bursting into tears, she broke from him and hurried out of the room.

The Creole was petrified. Her voice, like that of the accusing angel, had struck upon his guilty soul. So harsh a sentence from so gentle a being gave the words a tenfold force, and he shrank and shuddered as if all his secret villanies had just been laid bare to the gaze of the whole world. But this transient feeling of remorse soon passed away, and more angry passions usurped its place.

"There spoke my malignant aunt," he said; "the infernal words were hers, though put into Grace's mouth."

In this irritable mood he snatched up his hat, and without waiting to see Mrs. Hamilton, he abruptly quitted the house.

He was destined to another annoyance, though of a more petty character. As he flung himself sullenly on his horse, the animal, from some ruffle in his temper, began to back and turn round, a whim so trying to the impatient humour of Sir Walter, that he plied the spur, the whip, and the bit, without mercy; and the horse resenting this treatment, a struggle en-

sued for the mastery, in which the rider literally came off with the worst. After several plunges, and rearing and kicking, by a sudden jerk the brute contrived to throw the Creole over his head, to the infinite mortification of the latter, who heard a horse-laugh at his expense. He was in the saddle again in a twinkling, and cramming the spurs into the flanks of his steed, he departed at full gallop; but at the end of the first hundred yards, he was nearly unseated again by the horse shying at some object in the road, which he refused to pass. Indeed it looked more like a bundle of rags than a human being, that sat, or rather crouched, on the ground at the side of the narrow lane; and the snorting animal was only induced by dint of much alternate coaxing and compulsion to approach within a yard or two of the figure, where he stood wildly eyeing it, and panting with terror. Sir Walter, however, was bent upon his point, and at last succeeded in bringing his horse so close, as almost to trample on the man, and then reining him up, he suffered the wayward brute to gaze away his alarm. The poor wretch, in the mean time, turned up his face imploringly; it was pinched with cold and hunger, and of the colour of saffron, and his hand shook like an ague as he held out a tattered straw hat.

"For the love of God, bestow a ha'penny on a poor unfortunate fellow!"

"I'll bestow a broken head on you, scoundrel!" cried the vexed Sir Walter, and he aimed a blow at the object with the butt-end of his whip.

"The old thing!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a tone of piteous resignation: "more kicks than ha'pence. But that's my luck!"

The spurs were dashed in the horse's side; he darted past the beggar, and flew off with the speed of the whirlwind: but a new trouble was in store for the ill-used wretch. A tall, ungainly, heavy-looking man came striding up to him, and inquired, in a tone of authority, what had passed with the gentleman on horseback.

"I only asked him for a trifle to keep soul and body together," said the man in rags, "and he gave me this cut on the head. It has fetched blood; but I won't complain. It's what I'm used to, — only I'd take it kind if he'd made it wilful murder at once."

"Then you was begging," said the constable, with a wink and a nod, for it was Master Goff himself. "Let me alone for finding out vagrancy. I knew I'd pump it out of ye. You must come along with me."

"What for begging a ha'penny?" asked the object.

"Yes, or for half a farden," answered the constable. "It's the positive orders of his worship, Justice Rivers, and I'm especial particular round about his own terri-*tories*."

"It's just as usual!" said Joe; for to this wretched plight the poor fatalist had come at last. "To be grabbed for begging, the very first time I tried my hand at it. But it's Friday, and that's enough. Some would have got the copper at all events; but it's my luck to beg gratis. I thought it was a last chance, but it ain't. There's no chance for *me*!"

"Come along," said the constable, "it's only the stocks and a whipping!"

"I expect nothing else," answered Joe. "Such things come nat'ral to me now. I've always my full measure of misfortins, brimful and running over. Some would have had the jaundice, and some would have had the ague, and some would have had the rheumatiz; nobody but me would have had 'em all three at once, and not the luck neither to be laid out!"

"You need n't tell me a long story," said the pompous constable. "I know every thing; so pick up your rags. His worship will give you a furbishing, I warrant you."

"I do n't look for a friend in him," answered Joe. "All the world 's agin me, man, woman, and child. I do n't know what love or friendship is. But if any body was to take to me, I should only bring bad luck upon 'em;

so they're wise to keep off. There's nothing but evil for me in this world and may be the same in t'other — God knows."

With this dreary desponding sentiment, the poor, ragged, crippled, lean, ghastly yellow being got up into a half-stooping position, and in this deplorable posture halted feebly after the constable, to receive his new portion of affliction and stripes.

In the mean time, Sir Walter continued his gallop, which he afterwards changed to a canter, and then to a trot; but, with a view of dissipating his chagrin, instead of turning off to the Hall, he prolonged his ride by taking a road towards Hollington, a course which brought him into the vicinity of Squire Ned. He recollected himself, however, as the grotesque chimneys of the Cottage appeared above the trees; and, with an inclination to avoid an encounter with its owner, he was turning away by a side lane, when a clatter of horses' heels caused him to turn his head, and he beheld the Squire galloping towards him at full speed. With a vague misgiving, for which he was unable to account, Sir Walter instantly pricked his own horse into a gallop; but Ned's quick eye had detected him at a distance, and before the Creole had gone two hundred yards, he heard the other horse turn into the same lane.

With the consciousness that he was pursued, and aware of the Squire's determined hostility, he again urged his steed to the top of his speed; but he had to contend with a daring and experienced rider, and a horse much fresher than his own. Every moment the sound gained upon him; but the high-mettled animal that bore him made play gallantly, and whenever the clatter approached him, he made fresh and desperate efforts to maintain his lead. The rider's heart, meanwhile, beat fast as his horse's hoofs; the first indistinct flinching impulse that had induced him to flight, increased in intensity with the arduousness of the struggle, and as he found Cadeau straining under him to the utmost stretch of his powers, he felt the thrilling excitement of one who was racing for his life. The sight of a high gate closing the end of the lane, suggested a doubt that was solved almost as soon as formed. Cadeau flew over it like a bird! — the rider, who had held his breath in the suspense of expectation, gave a gasp of delight. But the leap was fatal to the speed of the now jaded horse. It shook him; his sinews were over-strained, and his pace suddenly declined. He was lame. Aware that he must now be inevitably overtaken, Sir Walter pulled up at once, and set himself erect in the saddle, somewhat in scorn, now the hurry of rapid motion had ceased, of the groundless terrors that had lately possessed him. A few minutes brought the Squire beside him, panting from the recent struggle. It took him a while to collect breath enough to speak, and the unusual harshness of his voice, when the words came at last, had a startling effect on the ear of the Creole.

"Must be a better than Cadeau to beat Barney — with revenge on his back!"

Sir Walter looked at the speaker; his teeth were set, and his one eye was glimmering with an unquiet light. These were evil omens; and the misgivings of the Baronet returned in all their force. He determined to avoid, or postpone, if possible, the impending discussion, whatever might be its nature. They were now in the nook of an extensive heath, which was traversed at some distance by the high-road to the metropolis; and in this direction the eye of Sir Walter involuntarily glanced, but no coach was in sight, no stir of human life was visible, save one solitary pedestrian far off, who was moving along the heath. The Creole drew himself up more stiffly in his seat, and looking steadfastly straight before him, so as to avoid seeing his companion, he spoke with a slight but dignified wave of the hand.

"Sir Walter Tyrrel declines all personal communication with Mr. Somerville."

"And Mr. Somerville," returned the Squire, speaking with a guttural sound, as if every syllable grated in his throat, "will have no further communication with Sir Walter Tyrrel. He is now plain Wat, and may soon be less than that."

"The old story," said the Baronet, smiling scornfully, as he became relieved of worse fears. "I have said, sir, that the ridiculous claim you allude to must be settled by proxy. My professional agent will meet yours."

"But suppose I should insist on a personal conference, under pain of personal consequences?" asked Ned, in a cooler tone, with a significant side-glance at his companion.

"I should resist and chastise so insolent a freedom," returned Sir Walter, but with a falter in his voice.

"Try it on then," ejaculated Ned, suddenly throwing himself off his own horse, and seizing the bridle of the other. It was effected so momentarily, that the confounded Baronet forgot to raise his whip, or to use the spur.

"Five minutes in words with you, or you lose your seat!"

"If I comply with your humour," said Walter, reddening, "it is only because I am loath to forget the gentleman in the ruffian. But I choose to prefer another time. Come to me at the Hall."

"Now or never," answered the Squire, with a slight stamp of the foot; "here, or nowhere."

"You presume on my last concession, sir," said the Baronet; "but have your way; courtesy shall be stretched on my side, to atone for the want of it on yours."

"Dismount," said the Squire.

A hot blush of rage and shame flushed the face of Sir Walter, as he slowly complied with this brief mandate; but whatever courage he possessed, was undermined by fear and guilt. He knew the rottenness of his foundation; and his spirit did not rise as he saw the Squire lead the two horses to the gate, to which he fastened them with peculiar care. After this operation had been deliberately performed, Ned returned slowly back, with his face turned towards the earth, and each hand plunged into the ample pockets of his green shooting-jacket. He stopped full in front of the Creole, upon whom he fixed his one eye in dead silence. A minute passed, and he did not speak or stir; another, and another, and another. It has been said that no animal, not even the lion excepted, can withstand the fixed, settled gaze of the human eye, without much restlessness and some fear; and if these be tokens of their inferiority to man, the Creole was degraded to the level of the brute. He flinched — he trembled, under the solitary orb that was scanning him: — he could almost have turned and fled. But all suspense is worse than certainty, and he hastened to speak with affected indifference.

"Now then, sir, for the birth, pedigree, and performances of your tattered protegée."

"That is gone by," said the Squire, with a hollow voice, "I have two graver questions to put. Where is Ringwood?" and his right hand drew a long duelling-pistol from his pocket. "Where is Raby?" and his other hand produced the fellow-weapon.

"Why!" exclaimed Sir Walter, turning pale and recoiling a step or two backwards, "do you mean to murder me?"

"It would be in your own line," answered Ned, between his teeth; "but foul as it was, you shall have fair play. One of us two must die on this turf."

"No!" said Sir Walter, averting his head, with a corresponding gesture of his hands, "there has been blood enough shed — by accident!"

"You lie, monster! you lie!" cried the Squire, with a terrible voice,

thrilling with passion. "Think of your cousins; think of Sir Mark. If you had three lives, I'd take them all! You shall die the death of a dog!"

"Mr. Somerville," said Sir Walter, but he visibly trembled, and his voice was almost a croak: "my dear Squire, you are misled. Let us, at least, explain before we cast away our lives upon a mistake. Inform me of the grounds of your baseless suspicions: appearances may be against me, which a few words would remove."

"Read that, and then that," answered the Squire, handing a couple of letters, "and then remove what you may!"

The Creole took the papers with a trembling hand, and, opening the first, read as follows: —

"DEAR SQUIRE — The enclosed was seized, amongst other papers, by the creditors of a deceased swindler and gambler. As a fellow sufferer, I had access to the documents, and the one I send only lately excited my attention. It obviously refers to some deep villany, and as I know you to be a very old intimate at Tylney Hall, I place the enclosed at your discretion.

"Your friend and fellow-sportsman,
"HARRY L. CAREW."

A glance at the second paper sufficed to shake the least nerve in the frame of the Creole: it was his own letter to Woodley, containing the outline of his own ambitious schemes, and his commendation of Raby to his confederate's care, — like the dove to the protection of the falcon. The crisis of his fate was come. His teeth chattered, and the hair rose on his head. The earth seemed opening under him as a living grave, and a precocious death-sweat broke out upon his forehead. But one chance remained, and he seized it with the desperation of a ruined man.

"I adopt your alternative — give me a pistol."

"Take your choice," said Ned, "all right — loaded an hour ago!" and he tendered the weapons with the enviable serenity of a good conscience. He was as cool, and his hand as steady, as if he had been only going to shoot at a target, instead of a living antagonist. The enormous guilt of the latter made the act the Squire contemplated seem a righteous one, in which he was but the instrument of the divine judgment on a murderer. Sir Walter, in the mean time, had selected a weapon, and stood irresolute, as if revolving what should be the nature of his next step. His pistol once rose a little upward, but it instantly dropped again by his side.

"Long shot or short!" said the Squire, "name your own distance."

"Twelve paces," said Sir Walter; "or fifteen," he added, unconsciously acknowledging the deadly skill of his opponent.

The Squire made no reply, but proceeded to measure off the required distance, the double click of the Creole's weapon, as he put it upon full-cock, striking upon his ear as he completed the third stride; the sixth had hardly been taken, when the report rang, and the bullet whistled close by the Squire's head.

Ned stopped short and wheeled round. His eye glanced fiercely for an instant at the assassin; the fatal barrel rose to its unerring level — a slight touch of the forefinger did the rest, and, after a convulsive leap, Sir Walter Tyrrel fell on his back on the grass, with a ball through his body.

In a moment Ned was bending over him, but not in remorse or pity. "One word, villain, for your soul's sake," he said; "did you see HIM in the fern?"

"I did — God forgive me!" said the dying man, rolling himself over as he completed the confession, so as to lie with his face downwards.

"Then die! the sooner the better," and a blow from the butt end of the

Squire's pistol sped the parting spirit in its exit. The savage act spoke terribly the awful amount of misery and anguish to be avenged — the complicated debt that even death was insufficient to expiate; one life for three, for the fate of Sir Mark was implicated in that of his sons. The avenger was influenced by this dreadful reckoning when he gave way to an impulse of which he repented the next moment. He rose up, and was standing musing intently over the shocking spectacle before him, when a rustling made him aware of the approach of the foot passenger, who, it will be remembered, had been seen at a distance crossing the heath. He came up out of breath.

"I am too late," he panted, "I hoped to prevent bloodshed. But what do I see? — the Squire!"

Ned turned and looked intently at the speaker, but he could not recognise him. He wore a blue coat and trousers, resembling the undress costume of a naval officer; and his face seemed weather-beaten and toil-worn, and imbrowned by exposure to hot suns and the sharp sea air. Still there was something familiar in the features, as there had been in the voice of the stranger, that made the Squire examine him narrowly: and when the true thought at last dawned upon his mind, he literally gasped as he uttered the words —

"Raby Tyrrel!"

CHAPTER XLII.

Do you live? Can you feel this pinch, can you see this hand I hold up? Could you smell out a red-herring? Should you hear a clap of thunder? Are you hot or cold,— would you jump out of the grate, like a parched pea, or turn blue or red in a north wind? Above all, are you hungry and thirsty? Would your mouth water now at a fat capon with truffles — would your lips smack after a cup of Canary? In good plain substantial English — are you alive?

THE GHOST OF GORHAMBURY.

Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign, —
And shall we never, never part?
My life — my all that 's mine?

No, never from this hour to part,
We 'll live and love so true,
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too.

GOLDSMITH.

THE Squire guessed aright. It was Raby Tyrrel who stood before him, erect and breathing, whilst — so strange and mysterious are the ways of Providence — the clay of the false kinsman who had plotted against his life, lay motionless at his feet, like the clod of the valley. He instantly rushed into the arms of the Squire, who was familiarly associated with the home he returned to seek; and Ned, convinced that he held real flesh and blood in his arms, returned the greeting with considerable warmth. The appearance of the wanderer indicated that, in addition to mental suffering he had undergone great bodily hardships since his flight; he was now known to be a joint victim with Ringwood of an atrocious scheme; — and it was painful to remember the forlorn state of the Hall, with but one member of the family in existence to welcome him back to the domestic hearth.

"And my father?" asked Raby eagerly, as they sundered.

Ned shook his head, and pointed to the dead body: "Ask him —. But, no — gone different roads."

The querist gazed incredulously at the speaker; his mind was reluctant to adopt such an afflicting interpretation as the words suggested. He looked from the Squire to the body and back again with a face that asked for explanation.

"Be a man," said Ned. "Hold up — can't tell you else. That viper there called himself Sir Walter."

Raby started, for he had not recognised the Creole from the body lying on his face; but his amazement was swallowed up in grief as the conviction came upon him that his parent was no more. He covered his face with his hands, and gave way to a violent burst of sorrow, which the taciturn Squire did not attempt to interrupt. He turned away from the mourner, and fixed his eye with a fierce frown upon the lifeless wretch who had been the origin of such desolation, and to so many. His teeth were set, and his hands were clenched, as if he mentally spurned as carrion the vile dust before him.

Seldom can a man look down on the corse of a follow-creature that he has bereaved of life without a sensation of remorse and regret, and a secret wish that he could recall the breath of life in its nostrils, and restore the flowing blood to its native arteries and veins. But the fiendish deeds of the Creole seemed to have placed him out of the pale of humanity. The slayer viewed the slain as inaccessible to compunction as the weapon he had used: even as the victorious peasant regards the gory carcass of the cruel wild wolf that had ravaged his fair flock. "Ringwood is now in heaven," he muttered, "and his murderer is in hell!"

The first stormy vehemence of grief by degrees abated; and Raby assumed the sad composure that belongs to a confirmed sorrow, when the heart has no more to hope or fear. He would not trust himself to look towards an object associated with feelings of horror, affliction, hatred, and abhorrence, but motioned to the Squire, and intimated a wish to leave the dreary scene of this fresh tragedy. The latter took up the pistol which the dead man still retained in his hand, and silently led the way towards the gate, where the horses were in waiting; he replaced the weapons in the holsters, and was soon mounted on Barney, whilst Raby placed himself in the saddle which the Creole had vacated for ever; but they did not get into motion for a minute or two, for the Squire was musing.

"Not to the Hall," he said, at last, "nobody there — go to Hawksley — your aunt's at the Justice's."

"With Grace?" asked Raby, with quivering lips and a faltering voice, for his heart sunk within him to inquire the fate of the dearest of its ties, when the frail tenure of human life had just been so forcibly impressed upon him.

"Like mother and daughter," answered the Squire, "and much need — both broken-hearted — poor Grace — never held up since she lost ——" He was going to add poor Ringwood, but he checked himself in consideration to his companion. Raby was silent, the intensest essence of pain and pleasure were intermingled in the intelligence. It wrung him with anguish to conceive her withering and wasting, and losing the very bloom of her youth in sorrow for his sake, and yet her devotion to him, and the evidence she was giving of her faithful affection in clinging to him when deserted by all the whole world, thrilled his heart with ecstasy. He instantly pricked Cadeau into a pace which made the Squire think he must be one of the best of nephews, whom nothing but a hard gallop would serve him in his eagerness to be in the arms of Mrs. Hamilton. In fact, by degrees the two horses increased their speed till it appeared but a second heat of the race that they had so recently struggled in It was the first time that Raby had

appeared in the character of a desperate rider, and the Squire was just conceiving hopes of him as likely to make some day a tolerable master of hounds, at least as far as riding up to them, when to his equal astonishment his companion pulled up so as to throw his horse upon his haunches, and then proceed at a walk.

"It will be too abrupt," he said to the Squire, "to go to Hawksley in this haste, such a shock might kill her."

"Not she," answered the Squire, his head still running upon the aunt; "got more game in her, — more afraid for Grace when she sees you."

Raby pulled up and thought a little, and at last formed his plan.

"You must go on before, Squire, and prepare them for my coming; do it as tenderly as you can. I dread any sudden agitation in her weak state. Pray keep that in mind: begin with the remotest hints."

"Need n't teach me," said the Squire, with a knowing nod, "soon be there — be off at once — one word though — want to know myself — how did you come alive?"

Raby stared at the speaker.

"Has there been any report of my death?"

"Report, eh," said the Squire, "something more, dead and buried — hearse, coffin; and all that — was at it myself."

"Buried!" said Raby, with fresh amazement, and gazing intently at the Squire, as if he thought he must be unsettled in his wits.

"Buried regularly," answered Ned; "had old Stubbs on your body, found drowned — family vault — funeral service, and every thing — ask Dr. Cobb."

A suspicion of the truth flashed across Raby's mind in a moment.

"There has been some mistake," he said: "what was the dress?"

"Queer enough," answered Ned, with an involuntary smile; "corded breeches, leather leggings, black silk waistcoat, and swallow-tailed coat."

"I am right," said Raby, "that body, Squire, was poor George the saddler's. I met with him in the forest at a time when I was beset with false terrors. I confessed I was a fugitive for my life, and at his persuasion I partly changed clothes with him."

"That's enough," said Ned, "see through it all — dead by proxy — better luck for you, — follow at a walk."

And away he galloped upon Barney, and was soon out of sight.

Raby was now left to his own reflections, and they were many, and of various complexions. Such is the uneven course of human life, that monotonous years sometimes roll over one's head which are only distinguishable from each other by their dates in the almanac; and then come thronging events of vital interest and importance, crowded into the space of a few days, nay hours. Thus during one revolution of the long hand upon the dial, Raby had found himself a witness of the fall of his arch enemy, a mourner for the loss of his father, and a lover outstripping the wind to rejoin the mistress of his soul. In such exciting moments, whilst all the passions are conflicting within, the spirit feels and owns its immortality whether for bliss or bale. Instinct with high impulses and powerful energies, the soul feels too godlike to depend with a contingent existence upon a little dust. The outward senses may perish, but the inward feelings is the life of life. In this exalted state of being, Raby was rapt: grief and joy, hope and fear, were panting at their extremest pitch, and the mere material world around was as the shadow of a dream. In a deep reverie he arrived at Hawksley, and Cadeau was left to depart, or remain at the gate at will, with the bridle on his neck, whilst the rider passed through the familiar wicket, and hurried across the front court and entered the front door, which was no sooner opened to him, than the hall resounded with female shrieks. The Squire, who had executed his mission with admirable tact to Grace and Mrs. Hamilton, had not thought it necessary to break the news

to any body else, and accordingly, when Tibbie, who opened the door, beheld the face of Raby, which she instantly recognised, she set up a loud scream, and exclaiming, "A wraith! a wraith!" rushed off into the kitchen, to infect all the other servants with her national terrors. Alarmed by this reception, Raby flew up stairs to the drawing-room, and in a moment, heedless of any other presence, the betrothed lovers were folded, weeping and silent, in each other's arms. Mrs. Hamilton, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, enjoyed the sight of such an unhoped-for consummation. The stern Justice looked on with a countenance strangely softened; but the astounded Squire actually gave a whistle of surprise, as he asked himself the question, — Was it possible she could have loved the two brothers at once? Of course his reason answered in the negative, but while it relieved Grace from the imputation of fickleness and double dealing, it was at some expense to her good taste.

"My own, my own dear Grace?" murmured Raby, "do we meet at last?"

And he confessed in his heart, that the present moment repaid him for all his past sufferings, however intense. Grace was unable to speak, but her arms replied for her as they clung more closely round his neck.

"I must claim my share, Raby, in your remembrance," said Mrs. Hamilton, who prudently interfered to divert and moderate the feelings of the young pair, and the aunt and nephew embraced with great affection. The Squire's tact suggested the same course to him, he took the hand of Grace and led her to a chair.

"Kissing enough," he said, "plenty of time before you; cool your heart a bit — mus'n't burst it with an over-charge."

"The Squire is right, Grace," said her father, approaching and fondly patting her on the head — "Compose yourself a little now, and be as happy afterwards as I wish you."

He then went and warmly welcomed his adopted son-in-law, whose reappearance was to restore his beloved daughter from that grave to which she seemed rapidly hastening. The lustrous eyes of Grace, and the happy tint which had already revived upon her cheek, amply repaid the parent for his kindness, whilst he enjoyed the removal of a burden of self-reproach which had weighed heavily on his mind. Even the Squire, though his satisfaction was damped by looking more backward than the others, rejoiced that a vestige was left of the brave old house of Tyrrel. He rubbed his hands, walked restlessly up and down, and, finally, gave Raby a slap on the back, wishing him joy as Sir Raby Tyrrel, with this awkward compliment,

"Glad you 've turned up, boy, — ought to have been otherwise, — must feel that, — but better than nobody at all."

In the mean time, the lovers regarded each other with earnest interest, mutually noting the alterations in each other's appearance. Grace was particularly struck with the brown hue of Raby's countenance, hinting foreign travel, and she yearned to be at liberty to listen to the narrative of his hardships, and recompense him with her sympathy for his past sorrows; and Mrs. Hamilton shared in the same wish. The justice shortly after retiring with the Squire to his study, to consult upon what was to be done with the Creole's body, and to concert subsequent measures, Raby entered upon the subject of his wanderings, and gave a hasty sketch of his fortunes and adventures. He could not, of course, trace the moral effect of his variegated course upon himself, wherefore an abstract shall be given with a commentary. To pass over, as he did, the catastrophe which made him a fugitive, and the horrors of the subsequent stormy night, spent in the open forest; on the following day he arrived at Woodley's, in St. James's Street, who, according to the instructions of the Creole, received him with every demonstration of kindness and interest in his fate. Intense anxiety

and hurry were affected, and the very next morning he was shipped, with a hundred pounds in his pocket, and fictitious letters of recommendation, on board of a vessel which was going, it was professed, on a voyage of discovery, where Raby's talents, his skill in drawing, and his love of botany, would make him an acquisition. The captain, however, was a notorious kidnapper, and the ship had proceeded but half way on her destination, when she was seized by an armed sloop that had been sent off in pursuit of her, at the instigation of the relatives of a young man of family, who was missing. Thus was Raby saved, probably, from the dreadful fate of becoming a slave in the Plantations. The youth they were in quest of, however, was not on board, but Raby, whose eyes were opened to his danger, took refuge in the sloop, the captain of which happened to be an old school-fellow. He was a kind-hearted, generous, and shrewd man; and he soon detected that some secret grief was preying upon the mind of his passenger, who, in the course of a few weeks, acquired his warmest regard and esteem. By degrees, he won Raby's entire confidence, and in the dreadful story that was confided to him, the captain, a veteran in the ways of life, immediately suspected villany, and eventually brought Raby over to his own opinion. The feelings of the latter underwent an immediate change; indignation and disgust took the place of remorse and self-reproach; his mind was re-strung, while the sharp bracing sea air invigorated his frame. He had besides to take a share in stirring events and active labour. A dreadful storm had compelled every hand on board to work at the pumps; and, on another occasion, the attack of a celebrated pirate, notorious for never giving quarter, armed every hand for its life, and Raby, in extreme contrast to all his former habits, found himself fighting foot to foot, and dealing wounds and destruction on savages in the shape of men. The effect of these compulsory exertions was very salutary; the energies of his mind and body were aroused, his spirit rallied, and the gentle Raby lost a portion of his gentleness, which he could well spare. He determined even to do vengeance on his treacherous kinsman, and kept earnest watch for the white cliffs of his country, with mingled yearnings. But the return of the sloop was delayed by counter orders received at sea, and the impatience of the exile made him embark himself on board a small merchantman, which was soon after taken by a French privateer. A new prospect now opened upon him of being a prisoner, perhaps for life, in a foreign dungeon; when, even in sight of the French coast, an English gun-brig hove in sight, and, after a short but animated chase, and a long and desperate action, the privateer struck, and Raby again found himself at liberty amongst his countrymen. A fishing smack set him on shore, with slender means, and without credentials, on the coast of his native country, and a great part of his journey towards the Hall had been made on foot. Such rapid vicissitudes of fortune, however trying and attended with agony, had been of the most signal benefit, bodily and mentally, to his constitution; like the practice of a skilful but severe surgeon, they had removed all the morbid parts that prevented the healing of his wounds. He aroused from the dreary abstractions of poetry, to the stern practical prose of human life, and was an altered man. But his head had changed, not his heart; his views were different, not his feelings. With the same old love for the really beautiful and really good, he had learned to detect and abhor their stimulants: with the same tenderness and gentleness as before, towards the tender and gentle, he had acquired a spirit of active not passive resistance to the violent and the unjust.

It is a modern discovery, that a hard blow will render any bar of iron magnetic when held in a due direction, and by something of the same hammering process, his heart had acquired its complete polarity of attraction and repulsion. He had only loved formerly, but in addition, he now hated, in the moral acceptation of that word by Doctor Johnson; and he had be-

come, to adopt an expressive phrase of the Fancy, "good with both hands." In the more apposite words of Miranda, in the Tempest, in reference to her beloved Ferdinand, the affectionate Grace could apply the same perfect character to her restored lover, that he was "gentle and not-fearful."

In justification of this theory, Raby's eyes glowed as he described the sea-fight with the pirate, and how, contending for life, liberty, and love, he slew the chief renegade with his own sword. His hands were clenched, and his teeth set, as he mentioned St. Kitts; and his foot even stamped as he confessed that his first object on touching English ground was to stretch his murderous kinsman on its turf. But then he melted like a woman when he spoke of his father and brother, and the sufferings of his dear Grace; he was still the same affectionate merciful being, in love with all creatures, however minute, that were harmless and unoffending. He had no longer any spurious sensibility, it is true: he would have shot a hare, a pheasant, or a partridge, but he would not "needlessly set foot upon a worm."

On the anniversary of Raby's return, he was united to Grace Rivers, a union that promised the more felicity as the parties had already fulfilled that universal condition of human happiness, that it shall be alloyed with grief. Their bliss was as perfect as it was pure, and as they stood together at the altar, the young couple might have adopted the beautiful lines quoted in "The Old Couple:"—

> "Blest happiness!—*Gently, my joys, distil,*
> *Lest ye do break the vessel you should fill!*"

POSTSCRIPT.

THE postcript of a letter is generally supposed to contain the subjects nearest to the writer's heart; but in a novel, on the contrary, it merely glances usually at the fate and fortunes of the subordinate characters of the *Dramatis Personæ*. Briefly, then, be it said, that a Coroner's verdict of "Justifiable Homicide" absolved the Squire from all legal consequences on account of the death of the Creole. The evidence of Raby, in proof of the unfair conduct of the deceased, in shooting so prematurely, partly inducing the jury to give such a sentence. Ned, however, was considerably embarrassed by having his *protegée* left upon his hands, whose claims had been superseded by the return of a nearer Heir to the Hall; but from this difficulty he was extricated by the poor student himself. For some time he maintained a decent exterior and correct conduct; but one unlucky day the influence of his old habits prevailed, and for the ensuing week he was never sober for an hour. Occasionally, Mr. Twigg had the mortification of seeing his cousin ranting before his door, "with his tail on," as the Highlanders say of their chieftains, for there was always a troop of boys laughing, capering, and shouting after Tom in Tatters. This annovance, added to the failure of all their country speculations, gave a disgust to the Ex-Sheriff and his family; they suddenly found out that the air of Hollington did not agree with them, — the Hive was sold at less than prime cost, — and they returned to the metropolis, where the blue and orange liveries, and the bright brass bees, were paraded every Sunday in Hyde Park. Matilda gave her hand to a rich soap-boiler; and T. junior married a house-maid, to the utter dismay of his family, and their displeasure was aggravated by his defence. She was "a tight little one," he said: "twice as much of a lady as his mother; and as a beauty, beat 'Tilda all to sticks."

Similar to the fate of Tom in Tatters, was that of Unlucky Joe, who also found a patron. The new Baronet tried to mend his fortune by installing him in the porter's lodge at the Hall; but though luck came at last, it arrived too late.

The poor fatalist, in his way to take possession, was knocked down, and run over by the last of all vehicles that ought to run away, a broad-wheeled wagon. Strange to say, his misfortunes arrived at this climax, corresponding with his own superstitious forebodings, on a Friday, and on that very Friday, too, which, in the Christian calendar, is described as Good!

The remains of Indiana slept undiscovered for years, and when found at last, presented merely a human skeleton enveloped in faded silk. Her name and origin were unknown, and she was never spoken of, but as the Queen of the Gipsies, nor was any human being conscious of the secret influence she had exercised over the fate of two generations of the family that inherited TYLNEY HALL.

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